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The Nation.

February 4, 1984 $1.25; U.K. 65p

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EDITORIAL

STATE OF THE UNION III

President Reagan's State of the Union Message was all strategy and no substance, a plan for the coming campaign rather than an assessment of national needs. He touched all the bases and pushed all the buttons: family values, patriotism, military supremacy, peace and prosperity. And he avoided all the pitfalls: he never mentioned civil rights, he sloughed off sexual discrimination in one skewed statistic, he raced through Lebanon in one paragraph and he disposed of the nuclear nightmare with a personal appeal to the Soviet people. No Nielsen will say whether it played in Novosibirsk, but the show must have got good numbers in Nebraska.

The Reagan strategy seems shrewd enough. The Republicans will run in 1984 on the 1980 platform, promising the same impossible dreams (balanced budgets, antiabortion amendments, prayer in the schools) and blaming others for all that's wrong in the land. It is standard political practice, of course, but Reagan's special gloss is disassociating himself from the failures of his Administration. Thus, the budget deficit, the environmental retreat and the various foreign policy disasters of the last three years are framed as depoliticized "problems" which appear without regard to executive action and must be managed by the creation of another bipartisan commission.

Reagan has been so successful at creating the image of success that the Democrats have seemed unable to come up with anything better. That leaves them in the difficult position of defending much that is not of their making, or seconding much of what the President says. There is one way out: attack the structure of Reaganism and offer a model for reorganizing government to meet the needs of the 1980s. So far, the Democratic candidates have not found their own strategy—or substance—for that task.

LORD MURDOCH OF THE 'BEAST'
Christopher Hitchens

NEW SOVIET MEDIA MAN
Michael Massing

ANGEL RAMA & MARTA TRABA
Bell Gale Chevigny

BLUE-COLLAR LEISURE
Maurice Isserman

'THE ISLAND OF CRIMEA'
Timothy Sergay

AFTER THE TAKEOVER

FAREWELL, CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

WILLIAM L. TAYLOR

At its first meeting, on January 16, the newly constituted U.S. Commission on Civil Rights declared that it is still independent. In a statement apparently intended to counter charges that the Reagan Administration has taken over the body, undermining its traditional autonomy, the commission proclaimed that it "belongs to no one, will run interference for no one and will serve no political ideology or special interest."

Thus last year's headline-making controversy about the Administration's determined campaign to pack the small and relatively powerless commission with ideologically congenial members continues to smolder. That effort is worth a retrospective look, both for what it reveals about the *modus operandi* of the Reagan domestic "revolution" and for what it says about the state of race relations in this country.

The commission was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the first time since Reconstruction that Congress had recognized racial discrimination as a serious national problem deserving study, if not action. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the commission served as an ombudsman to the government, establishing the facts and urging remedial Federal actions. Often its findings caused considerable discomfort to the Administration. After the Reagan purge, however, the commission became a radically different entity—one which, in the view of its chairman, was not free to contravene Administration policy and which, in the view of its staff director, should channel its energies toward supporting policies already embraced by the Administration. This is how it happened.

(Continued on Page 128)

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LETTERS.

DON'T TRUST THE DEMOCRATS

Minneapolis

In "Planning With a Political Face" [*The Nation*, Dec. 31-Jan. 7], Derek Shearer writes off the Citizens Party and other third-party efforts. He should remember that legislation abolishing slavery, setting a minimum wage, funding Social Security, establishing an eight-hour workday and instituting child labor laws were all originally introduced through third-party initiatives.

Suggesting to voters that the Democratic Party should be accepted as the "Greens" of America is placing a wolf in sheep's clothing. The party's resistance to an economic program that emphasizes useful work and the production of goods that people need is exactly why some voters have turned to the Citizens Party. We're not satisfied with the top-down approach to solving economic problems espoused by the Democrats. In contrast, we'd like to see corporate boards opened to include community and worker representatives, and tax loopholes closed which now provide "corporate welfare." There is absolutely no reason to believe that the Democratic Party, financed by big business and committed to neo-imperialism, will turn its offices over to people who believe in economic democracy and demilitarized, noninterventionist foreign policy.

Since Shearer wrote "Wrong Time, Wrong Race" [*The Nation*, May 10, 1980], Citizens Party candidates have entered 245 local races in twenty states, winning fifteen elections and finishing a close second in others. In St. Paul, the Citizens Party's City Council candidates were praised by the city's newspaper for sending out the clearest progressive message and for raising issues that otherwise would have gone unmentioned.

If America is to become "Green" within the two-party system, fundamental changes in the Democratic Party are required. That can happen, we believe, only if a strong independent coalition, which includes the Citizens Party, continues to apply pressure, in increasing doses, from the outside.

Todd Kolod, Coordinator
Kathryn Anderson, Co-chair
Citizens Party of Minnesota

STOPPING BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

Cambridge, Mass.

Congratulations to Charles Piller on his excellent article, "DNA—Key to Biological Warfare?" [*The Nation*, Dec. 10]. Piller succeeds in documenting what many scientists and concerned citizens have suspected: the purpose of the Defense Department's recombinant DNA research is not clear, but it may well be to develop new biological weapons.

Piller calls for a halt to research on "offensive" biological weapons. I am writing on behalf of the Committee for Responsible Genetics, a newly formed national organization dedicated to insuring that genetic technologies be developed and used safely and in the public's interest. We have been organizing a task force on biological weapons to formulate a strategy for preventing a biological weapons race. We would appreciate hearing from any *Nation* readers who are interested in joining our efforts (P.O. Box 759, Cambridge, Mass. 02238).

Biotechnology promises to penetrate all aspects of human life. The research that has led to the current burst of commercial activity was based on forty years of taxpayers' financing. Currently, major developments that should remain in the public sector are being transferred to the private sector. As a result the public is being asked to buy back what it had financed. Genetic engineering can and should be directed toward eradicating major social problems such as world hunger, disease and environmental degradation. We must take steps to protect the public investment in this powerful technology and to insure that it is used for peaceful purposes.

Terri Goldberg, Director
Committee for Responsible Genetics

REVIEWER REVIEWED

New York City

When I finished *Working Class Hero*, I realized it was a controversial reading of the history and contemporary crisis of American labor, but I did not realize how subject it would be to misreading. Sadly, that is what Michael Kazin has done in his review ["Organizing Organized Labor," *The Nation*, Jan. 21]. First, he interprets the book's first section as an endorsement of Samuel Gompers's leadership of the A.F.L. I intended to show that Gompers played a crucial role in the corporativist history of the labor movement, despite the alternative perspectives of socialists, rank-and-file militants and the I.W.W. Corporativism is by no means "pure and simple" trade unionism but a social contract to reject class struggle in favor of social, political and economic collaboration with capital. Far from making "peace with the cigar-maker's legacy" as Kazin charges, I try to show that Gompers's legacy contained the program of his opponents. My use of his biography was deliberate; I wanted to emphasize the broad corporativist vision of the A.F.L. founder rather than perpetuate his image as a "business unionist." I was less interested in marshaling the so-called facts than in extracting the core of the historical meaning.

Second, I was not interested, for the purposes of this volume, in providing innumerable caveats about rank-and-file and leftist contributions to the labor movement. We lost—a fact rarely acknowledged by social and radical historians. It was a defeat no amount of counterfacts can erase. In my view the defeat of the left was not merely the result of poor leadership by labor's hierarchy. It was the outcome of the economic weight of U.S. capital and the discursive hegemony of the conservative labor leaders.

Third, I do not believe the progressives can "capture leadership" of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., and that objective is quite irrelevant to my argument. I want a progressive leadership of a fraction of the labor movement, a task, as I argue in a long chapter of the book, requiring organizing new workers on a new basis, both strategically and ideologically. I offer a vision and some suggestions about the conditions of its possibility. Like other visionaries, I do not expect a blueprint to be followed anyway, but maybe a few unionists and labor intellectuals will find my "wish list" provocative and even helpful. Obviously Kazin was not impressed.

One speculation: perhaps Kazin's inability to grasp my argument is the result of his own vision, one which is ensconced in images of past heroics. In contrast, my opening section is titled "The Rise of American Labor: An Unromantic View." Unlike many American social historians, I am persuaded that we must look at the past with a cold but passionate eye, and be prepared to warm up to the future. Kazin holds to the reverse.

Stanley Aronowitz

KAZIN REPLIES

San Francisco

I am afraid Aronowitz's letter only confirms my opinion of his book. He portrays a labor movement that, in the past, utterly failed to live up to socialist dreams, yet he expects contemporary workers to flock to his vision of "class struggle unionism." I call *that* romantic.

My major criticism of *Working Class Hero* is that it does not address the concrete problems that labor faces. The last thing embattled union members need is for intellectuals to spin out grand programs informed by neither political reality nor a sense of strategy.

Michael Kazin

AUTHOR'S QUERY

Princeton, N.J.

For a political biography of H.H. Wilson, professor of politics at Princeton (1947-77) and frequent contributor to *The Nation* in the 1950s, I would appreciate hearing from anyone with personal reminiscences, correspondence or other information on his career as a teacher and civil libertarian.

David Holden
Department of Politics
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J. 08544

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Manuscripts: All work submitted will be read by the editors. The magazine cannot, however, be responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts unless they are accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes.

Publisher, Hamilton Fish 3rd

Associate Publisher, David Parker; *Advertising Manager,* Carole Kraemer; *Business Manager,* Ann B. Epstein; *Bookkeeper,* Gertrude Silverston; *Art/Production Manager,* Jane Sharples; *Circulation Manager,* Stephen W. Soule; *Subscription Manager,* Cookee V. Klein; *Classified Advertising Manager,* George Monaco; *Receptionist,* Greta Loell; *Mail Clerk,* John Holtz; *Administrative Secretary,* Shirley Sulat; *Nation Associates,* Claudine Bacher; *Nation News Service,* Jeff Sorensen.

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the first week in January, and biweekly in July and August) by Nation Enterprises and © 1984 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011. Tel.: 212-242-8400. *Subscription Mail Address:* Nation Subscription Service, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION.

Regular Subscription Price: One year, $40; two years, $72; six months, $20. Add $7 per year postage Canada, Mexico; $13 per year other foreign. All foreign subscriptions must be paid in equivalent U.S. funds. Claims for missed issues must be made within 60 days (120 days, foreign) of publication date; back issues available $3 prepaid ($4 foreign). **Please allow 6-8 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries should be sent to: *The Nation,* Subscription Services, P.O. Box 1953, Marion, Ohio 43305.

EDITORIALS.

Must It Be Meese?

Until he was nominated to succeed William French Smith as Attorney General, White House counselor Edwin Meese 3d seemed to enjoy playing the role of a fat James Watt. He described the American Civil Liberties Union as a "criminals' lobby." He announced that he had never seen "any authoritative figures that there are hungry children" in America and that a lot of people go to soup kitchens "because the food is free and that's easier than paying for it." He is such a darling of the right that beside him, James A. Baker 3d is a liberal.

But there are two important differences between James Watt running the Interior Department and Ed Meese running the Justice Department. First, Meese is smarter than Watt. Robert Gnaizda, who was deputy director of the California Rural Legal Assistance program when Meese attempted to dismantle it under Governor Reagan, says, "Watt only had a fastball. Meese has a spitball, a knuckler, a curve ball. You don't see the damage he's done until it's too late."

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The damage he can do is the second difference. The Interior Department is a critical Federal agency, but its head has limited power. As the President's lawyer and the nation's chief prosecutor, the Attorney General wields awesome power, formally and informally. In addition to the patronage that goes with the office, he or his subordinates decide whether, when and whom to indict, prosecute, deport, enjoin, settle with or litigate against in cases affecting millions of Americans and involving hundreds of billions of dollars. In addition, the department's legal opinions influence the actions of every government department.

Examples of the harm a weak, corrupt or lawless Attorney General can inflict are legion: John Mitchell and Watergate, A. Mitchell Palmer and his infamous raids, Harry M. Daugherty and the Teapot Dome scandal. The less visible William French Smith underscores the point. His Justice Department sought to roll back a generation of civil rights progress, made serious inroads into the First Amendment, helped draw the secrecy veil over the operations of government and supported the expansion of the President's war powers. Smith comported himself more as Ronald Reagan's mouthpiece than as his legal counselor. Meese will be even worse. To believe otherwise is to believe in Tinker Bell.

Congress was last faced with a threat to the integrity of our judicial system when Richard Nixon nominated the racist Harrold Carswell to the Supreme Court. With a healthy assist from civil rights and civil liberties groups, the Senate derailed that potentially disastrous appointment. Confirmation hearings on the nomination of Meese will be scheduled in a few weeks. Now that he is out of the kitchen, let's put him in the soup.

Echo in Uruguay

Montevideo

For more than ten years Uruguay's hard-bitten military has run this country of 3 million on illusions: only it could defeat the leftist guerrilla insurgency which was crushed in the early 1970s and has revived recently; only it could teach the politicians about efficiency and incorruptibility in government; and only it could serve as a bulwark against a Moscow-directed international conspiracy.

Last week's highly successful general strike, which virtually shut down the entire country, demolished the illusions that have kept the generals in office. All that remains is fear. The strike was a pointed reminder of how isolated the regime of Gen. Gregorio Alvarez has become. Despite a heavy-handed government campaign of threat and intimidation, the strike provided irrefutable evidence of vast popular discontent with the military and with its ambiguous promises to turn over power to civilians by March 1985. It was also a warning that Alvarez faces increased militance from workers fed up with 15 percent unemployment, a 51 percent annual inflation rate and recent hikes in utility rates.

The success of the strike, the first since the once-powerful National Workers Confederation tried to shut down the country for two weeks in the aftermath of the military-backed 1973 coup, was no surprise to most observers here. For months, crowds at soccer matches have chanted slogans against the regime. When government ministers and their wives go to restaurants, they are greeted by a steady clanging of silverware. "The ministers and their families feel a very strong isolation," admitted one top government official. "Even when attending parties given by the elite there is a sense of ostracism." In the countryside, soldiers have been harassed by angry, jeering crowds. Strikes and factory takeovers are becoming routine. At the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve, tens of thousands of Uruguayans greeted 1984 by banging pots and pans—a form of protest borrowed from the anti-Pinochet movement in Chile. The kitchenware cacophony occurred three times within the Christmas season.

Despite the opposition's increased militance, there are growing indications that the government plans to renege on its pledge to hold elections in November. One well-placed civilian official estimated that in the past two months the chances that they will be held then have dropped from "90 percent to 50-50." Repression has been stepped up. Last month rigid censorship was imposed on Uruguay's political weeklies, the only regular outlet for antigovernment sentiment.

Meanwhile, Alvarez named a handful of civilian cronies to important government posts formerly held by military men. His move was seen as an attempt to set up an independent political patronage system. In the past few weeks the Interior Minister, an Alvarez confidant, and the Labor Minister have warned that continued protests would make the electoral timetable "unpredictable." On January 20, Alvarez received an important boost in the twenty-six-man ruling Military Council when a hard-line general replaced the leader of the army's moderate wing as Commander in Chief.

What has worried Uruguay's military—and simultaneously strengthened Alvarez's hand—is Argentine President Raúl Alfonsín's campaign to punish his country's former military rulers for human rights violations and corruption. In the words of Enrique Tarigo, a leading opponent of the regime, the Uruguayan generals are "scared out of their wits." Tarigo said that civilian politicians had hoped the peaceful transfer of power in Argentina and Alfonsín's civility toward his opposition would be a salutary example to Uruguay's praetorians. Instead, he said, "If you talk to a military man today you can't go ten minutes without him mentioning that Uruguay isn't Argentina, which is true." In contrast with Argentina's 6,000 to 30,000 missing persons, human rights groups here list seventeen persons as disappeared. But they also say that 5,000 have been tortured and that the country's jails hold as many as 900 political prisoners.

Politicians here have been trying to reassure the military, pointing out that of Uruguay's three major parties, only the faction of the Blanco Party headed by former Senator Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, now in exile, openly backed the

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strike. Many politicians were privately critical of the work stoppage, saying that it had been fomented by members of the banned leftist parties, who were attempting to capitalize on the popular discontent. Two weeks ago, in a moderately worded communiqué, the three parties sought to distinguish the situation in Uruguay from that in Argentina. They promised to follow Uruguay's "own path, centered on the singularity of its own civic traditions." Time, however, may be running out for moderate alternatives to the wily Alvarez. Uruguayan officials say privately that the debate in some sectors of the military now centers not on whether to cancel the elections but whether the gains to the regime of doing so would be worth the price of the popular uprising that would inevitably ensue.

MARTIN ANDERSEN

Martin Andersen writes for Newsweek *from Buenos Aires.*

Brooks Atkinson

Brooks Atkinson, retired drama critic of *The New York Times* who died last month at the age of 89, set an ethical standard that should inspire critics in every field. Atkinson took stands on issues outside the theater. When freedom was at stake, he spoke out, for himself and for people throughout the country whose views were under attack. Atkinson's boldest stroke for freedom appeared in an unlikely forum: the letters column of *The New York Times*. Although *The Times* has a policy that staff writers cannot express their opinions in that way, an exception was made in Atkinson's case because of his prestige as a critic and the paper's former Moscow correspondent.

The letter was dated August 9, 1954. At the time, Senator McCarthy was riding high, and government officials and others in the public eye, including some journalists, were running scared. *The Times* gave it a timid heading, "A Compulsion Toward Totalitarian Attitudes Seen in Many Areas," but that did not diminish the power of Atkinson's words:

> We can vote in this country. This is doubtless the principal source of our liberty. There is freedom of speech for citizens willing to take the consequences.
>
> In many respects, however, both the administrative and legislative branches of the Government show a compulsion toward totalitarian attitudes and practices.

Atkinson went on to provide a bill of particulars:

> The Government refuses passports to citizens it does not like.
>
> It blocks the free exchange of ideas by denying visas to eminent European scientists and writers who have been invited by American citizens to attend professional conferences here.
>
> It has repudiated the scientist who led the world in the construction of the atom bomb [J. Robert Oppenheimer] because he is not a standardized man.
>
> It maintains an organization of investigators [the Federal Bureau of Investigation] who collect, among other items, facts concerning the newspaper reading habits of citizens and the mail that goes into their homes. . . .
>
> It blackmails citizens into informing on each other. . . .
>
> Government committees presume to give absolution to citizens who confess their political sins and promise not to violate the committees' party line in the future.
>
> The Government has permitted a Senator [Joseph McCarthy] to set himself up as public prosecutor. . . .
>
> It sacks or rusticates foreign service officers who do not parrot the party line at home.
>
> It tries to consolidate itself in power by denouncing its predecessors in office as traitors.

The letter concludes simply: "I wonder if Americans really want it that way."

Two weeks after the letter appeared in *The Times*, Atkinson told me: "The response was much more overwhelming than I had anticipated. It was 10-to-1 favorable." And a few years later, when we reminisced about it, Atkinson said, "It touched on some things that I have had to make a conscious stand about." The letter may have been the most important criticism he ever wrote. It was a revelation of the man and his character.

HERBERT MITGANG

Herbert Mitgang, cultural correspondent of The New York Times, *was editor of its Sunday drama section from 1956 to 1963, and is author of the play* Mister Lincoln.

Swedish Buy-out

Just before Christmas, Sweden's parliament voted to establish union-controlled wage-earner funds, financed by payroll taxes and corporate profits, that will buy up shares of stock in the country's industrial corporations. If the program continues, by the end of the decade the funds will be the largest single stockholder in Swedish industry.

The innovation, which was pushed by Sweden's Social Democratic government, extends public intervention in the economy beyond the "consensus" of business, government and labor which was established when Sweden originated the modern welfare state fifty years ago. It also goes beyond the concept of "co-determination"—reserving places for labor members on corporate boards of directors—which became popular in Scandinavia and West Germany after World War II.

American free enterprisers used to worry about creeping socialism in Sweden, but 80 percent of that country's industry is still privately owned. It is, however, strictly regulated and responsible for supporting one of the most inclusive and successful social welfare systems in the world. Through the wage-earner funds, workers will gain influence over major corporate policy decisions without the conflicts caused by traditional expropriation and nationalization procedures.

HENRY M. CHRISTMAN

Henry M. Christman is a member of the Workers' Compensation Board of New York State. He is editing the papers of Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, to be published by Schocken Books.

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

In the far-off summer of 1979, Rupert Murdoch's company News Limited made a fresh conquest. It snapped up a television station in Sydney, Australia, called Ten-10. The acquisition exposed News Limited—a name that sounds more perfect each time one hears it—to the nuisance of a public hearing. The Australian Broadcasting Commission suspected that Murdoch might own enough outlets already. It asked him whether he planned any major alterations in policy or management. Murdoch replied that with such a successful station, "it would be madness to contemplate any changes at all. . . . I wish to give an assurance to the tribunal that no change is contemplated." Concerning Ten-10's chairman, Sir Kenneth Humphreys, Murdoch insisted that he had done "a magnificent job" and that "industry hearsay" about firings should be ignored.

It took Murdoch three whole months to sack Sir Kenneth and to replace him with News Limited's finance director, the no less perfectly named Mervyn Rich. So far, so good.

In the early months of 1981, Murdoch was trying to become the owner of Times Newspapers in London, publishers of *The Times*, *The Sunday Times* and three distinguished education and literary reviews. Since he already owned the bottom end of Fleet Street (and by bottom end, I mean *The Sun* and *News of the World*, the two most salacious and reactionary sheets in the land) it was thought by even the most etiolated members of the establishment that he ought not to buy the top end unless he gave a few "guarantees." He did. By promising editorial support for Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Murdoch avoided the inconvenience of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission invigilation, which can be ordered only by the government. But he still had to face a House of Commons committee. What, he was asked, were his guarantees worth? Why had Sir Kenneth Humphreys—he of the "magnificent job"—been dismissed with such dispatch? Well, said Murdoch, he did not, of course, wish to abuse the privilege afforded by a House of Commons committee hearing, but it pained him to have to say that Sir Kenneth had been found, once the books were opened, to be—not *quite* what one might wish. The committee members nodded gravely. We quite understand, old boy; could have happened to anyone. But an Australian colleague of mine was certain that no allegation of the kind had ever been made against Sir Kenneth. We risked a call to Down Under. He was right. Sir Kenneth Humphreys had died, his good name unsmirched, shortly before the House of Commons committee met for its hearing. Only Murdoch would have known, when he entered the room, that he could secure a hold on the most important newspaper group in Britain by defaming a dead man.

Now to shift the scene and alter the tone a bit. Not long after Murdoch assumed control of Times Newspapers, and before he fired Harold Evans, the editor of *The Times*, and made the paper even more suffocatingly mediocre and conservative than it already was, the editorship of *The Times Literary Supplement* became vacant. To the surprise of many of his executives, Murdoch took a strong interest in the choice of a new editor and decided to sit on the panel of interviewers. Jeremy Treglown, one of the candidates, lived in Oxford. Murdoch asked him aggressively if he commuted to work each day. Treglown replied that he did. How, inquired Murdoch, could the company get a full day's work out of him with such a long way to travel? Sensing all was lost, Treglown countered by asking Murdoch if he, too, had not come a long distance to do *his* job? An awkward silence was broken when Murdoch said, in effect, that he relished the spunk of this candidate. Treglown (quite coincidentally the best applicant, in my view) was thereby hired.

It might be said that the first of these interlocking stories shows Murdoch in a poor light, the second in a garish light, the third in a more flattering one. The point, however, is that there are not three stories here. There is only one. Murdoch's good humor is as dangerous and random as his ill temper. To work for him is like working for an Oriental or Stalinist despot, whose giggles may turn to yelps and snarls at any moment. His caprice is insatiable and menacing, and it has already debauched the press in three countries. As Harold Evans puts it in his recent over- and underrated book, *Good Times, Bad Times*:

> Murdoch is always portrayed as the great shirt-sleeved journalist, excited by deadlines and news. It was a credible view perhaps when he owned a handful of newspapers in his early days and started *The Australian*. It has become threadbare as an explanation of his drive and ambition. It is not necessary to own eighty papers to satisfy a love of journalism. His incessant accumulation of titles does not bring him closer to his supposed passion, it removes him from it.

Evans came to this conclusion retrospectively, of course. His book shows, often quite unintentionally, that the apparently stout and staid British upper class can always be gulled by a riverboat gambler or a plausible swamp-stock salesman. It was not just Murdoch but the chinless ninnies of the "traditional" *Times* who fell for the "Hitler diaries." It was Murdoch who said, as a grace note to that scandal, "After all, we are in the entertainment business." In those eight words, the proprietor showed what he thought of the pomposity and self-regard of the respectable journals he had purchased, and of the allegedly superior people who had sold them to him. The Hitler diaries were Murdoch's revenge for Gallipoli. If the Führer had turned up alive, he would have been appointed to the editorial page just to show who was boss.

The British deserve all they got, and are getting. Can the same be said of the Chicago *Sun-Times*? Murdoch's smash-and-grab raid on that paper has something in common with his London depredations, but not much (the foolish complicity of the Marshall Field dynasty is the most obvious similarity). He is showing serious signs of being overstretched. With his lack of attention has come a loss of his old finesse. As in past forays, he undoubtedly wanted to

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CALVIN TRILLIN

"Daddy, I don't understand why President Reagan took responsibility for the Marine Corps barracks in Beirut being bombed. He didn't do it, did he?"

"Of course not. He simply wanted to take credit for taking the blame. How about, as an extra treat this morning, some cereal that contains no riboflavin at all?"

"I think I like riboflavin, Daddy. Do you mean he gets credit for taking the blame the way George Washington got credit for admitting that he was to blame for chopping down the cherry tree?"

"Oh, no. Because George Washington really did chop down the cherry tree. You do get some credit for admitting something wrong you really did, but then everyone would know you did it. It's much better to take the blame for something you had nothing to do with. Everybody knows that Ronald Reagan wasn't in charge of making sure the perimeter of the Marine barracks in Beirut was secure. He lives in Washington, and he doesn't work evenings."

"But you always taught me that if I've done something wrong, I'm supposed to tell the truth and admit it."

"Absolutely. Unless you go into politics. If a cherry tree in the White House Rose Garden got chopped down and all the evidence pointed to Ronald Reagan, he would say, 'I cannot tell a lie: there's a lady in California who picks up her welfare check every week in a Cadillac.' Would you like some more cereal? I read in the newspaper that there are no hungry children in America at all, and I wouldn't want to be responsible for spoiling the record."

"Do you mean you wouldn't really want to be responsible, or you wouldn't want to take the blame for being responsible, or you would want to take the credit for taking the blame?"

"Eat your cereal. You'll be late for school."

"But what if Ronald Reagan didn't chop down the cherry tree in the Rose Garden?"

"He did. He chopped it down."

"Really, Daddy. What if some White House gardener chopped down the tree by mistake?"

"Well, then, Reagan would take the blame, of course, because he obviously didn't have anything to do with it. He'd say that it was his responsibility because he was the head of the government that the gardener worked for. He'd say he still had a lot of faith in the gardener and that the gardener shouldn't be blamed. And everybody would say that it was very decent of the President to take the blame for chopping down the cherry tree when it was obvious that he was absolutely blameless. They'd say that any man who can take the rap for his gardener is really a decent guy—a guy who probably has a lot of personal sympathy for poor people, if only they'd trade in their Cadillacs for some sort of compact. And the gardener would keep cutting down cherry trees until there weren't any more cherry trees."

"Daddy?"

"Yes?"

"Aren't you burning the toast?"

"It wasn't my fault. The sun was in my eyes. The ball hit a pebble."

"Daddy, weren't the people who got blamed for organizing the death squads in El Salvador really the people who did it?"

"I suppose so."

"And what happened to them?"

"They were sent into what the newscaster on the radio called 'diplomatic exile.'"

"What does that mean?"

"It means that they have to go someplace like France on an expense account."

"That's a punishment?"

"Why do you think I've always taught you that if you've done something wrong you're supposed to tell the truth and admit it? If you admit it to the right person, you might be sent to France on an expense account."

"Did that man Charles Z. Wick who was secretly taping his phone conversations admit that he did it?"

"No, he denied that he did it—until *The New York Times* printed the evidence. That's another reason I've always taught you that if you've done something wrong you're supposed to tell the truth and admit it: you can never tell who might have a transcript."

"So did he get punished?"

"Not yet, but if the White House gets a lot of pressure from Congress and the press, he might have to go to France on an expense account, too. Would you like an egg this morning? I'm afraid somebody has ruined the toast. Probably the gardener."

"No, thank you. One thing I just thought of, Daddy: If the President takes the blame for something everyone knows he didn't do, then the person who was really to blame doesn't get blamed and neither does the President. So where does the blame go?"

"Would you like some more cereal?"

"Who was supposed to make sure the perimeter of the Marine barracks in Beirut was secure?"

"The Marine officers in charge."

"Well, why didn't they?"

"Well, partly because the marines were sent there as a peacekeeping force and then they really became combatants but they were still trying to act like a peacekeeping force so it wouldn't have to be admitted that they were combatants."

"Who sent them there as a peacekeeping force?"

"Ronald Reagan."

"Who didn't want to admit that they had become combatants?"

"Ronald Reagan."

"Well, then, maybe he should have taken the responsibility for the barracks being bombed because it was really his fault."

"I think I'll have a bowl of cereal myself, with riboflavin."

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DISPATCHES.

■ NICARAGUA: Political Economics

"The United States cannot support this proposal. We continue to believe that the current macroeconomic policies of the government of Nicaragua are not conducive to economic development." So said Ira Kaylin, at the time the U.S. representative to the Inter-American Development Bank, in explaining his vote against Nicaragua's request for a loan to complete a small rural road project. Confidential transcripts of a meeting of the bank's board of executive directors last June reveal that none of the bank's other forty-two member countries agreed with Kaylin's assessment. Behind closed doors, the usually reticent bankers were unusually outspoken in their criticism of the U.S. action.

Uruguayan representative Luis Pigurina said, "I wish simply to state for the record that we consider it undesirable in an institution such as this one or the World Bank for decisions to be made on the basis of political motives in economic disguise." And Brazil's Luiz Barbosa added, "I apologize to my good friend Ira Kaylin, but [if] the way he expressed himself in voting on behalf of his country . . . were to become public knowledge, the expression would be an unbeatable candidate for what *The Washington Post* calls Reaganism of the Week."

At another meeting last September 21, Italy's Carlo Binetti made an impassioned appeal for approval of another pending loan, for a fishing project in Nicaragua. But it too was opposed by the United States, whose representative, Jose Manuel Casanova, objected on the ground that the Nicaraguan government could not "insure an adequate supply of fuel . . . for the operation of these fishing boats." It was a nervy objection, considering C.I.A.-backed guerrillas have bombed Nicaragua's major fuel depots.

The other executive directors accused Casanova of "filibustering," and over his objections voted to award Nicaragua the $30.7 million loan. "Nicaragua was put on Reagan's hit list in the summer of 1981," says Jim Morrell, research director of the Center for International Policy, which monitors the actions of the multilateral development banks. "But the Canadian, European and Latin bank directors simply oppose using political criteria in lending. They're likely to make a point of approving several other agricultural and rural road-building projects for Nicaragua in upcoming months."

■ BRITAIN: Unlocking Official Secrets

Britain's counterpart to Ralph Nader is the equally stubborn Des Wilson. In fifteen years of what the British press calls "campaigning," Wilson has successfully mobilized citizen groups around diverse environmental, civil libertarian and economic issues. In early January he unveiled his latest campaign—for passage of a British equivalent of the Freedom of Information Act.

Few traditions are as deeply ingrained in British political life as the government's penchant for secrecy. The Official Secrets Act has a long history. Its first section, which is supposed to be limited to espionage, was approved in 1889, five years after Parliament granted universal male suffrage. The particularly onerous Section 2, the "catchall" provision which covers everything from the activities of the government bureaucracy to children's school files and individuals' medical records, was passed by the House of Commons in 1911, after a thirty-minute debate on the threat of German espionage.

Wilson's proposed legislation exempts from disclosure any information that might damage national security, impair foreign relations, affect the value of British currency, impede law enforcement or violate an individual's privacy. But other proposed statutes would provide immunity for government officials who disclose information deemed to be in the public interest.

Wilson may be waging an uphill campaign, but he has gained considerable support, particularly from the British press. He also has a war chest of about $70,000. If other arguments fail, he may be able to shame the Commons into passing the bill by reminding the members that France, the Netherlands, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Canada and New Zealand have some form of freedom of information legislation.

Important political backing has come from more than 150 M.P.s representing the Labor, Liberal and Social Democratic Parties. Several former high-ranking officials and civil servants have spoken in favor of the legislation, including Sir Patrick Nairne, a former Cabinet adviser on defense.

Predictably, the Prime Minister is opposed, calling the campaign "inappropriate and unnecessary." Wilson pointed out that in 1960, a novice M.P. named Margaret Thatcher gave one of her first speeches in Commons on the need for more openness in government. Now she is an insider and knows better. As in the Reagan Administration, the government inner circle wants a monopoly on the leaking of official secrets.

■ THE SUDAN: Southern Rebellion

President Gaafar al-Nimeiry has been in power since 1969, but many observers don't think he will last much longer. Last year he made two blunders that have reopened the wounds of Sudanese North-South division. In September, over the objections of Southern leaders, he divided the largely black and Christian South into three provinces, each of which was then incorporated into an existing, largely Moslem, Northern province. Later that month, under pressure from the Moslem Brotherhood, he imposed sharia (Islamic law). In December, the first sentence under sharia was carried out: a thief's hand was cut off. The moves have rejuvenated support for the long-dormant Anya Nya guerrilla movement led by the American-educated army officer Col. John Garang.

For seventeen years the Anya Nya guerrillas fought for the independence of the South. In 1972 they laid down their arms in return for promises of autonomy. Now the govern-

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KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

ment has 15,000 troops stationed in the South to combat the Anya Nya. "Africa Confidential," the London-based newsletter, reports that at least 1,000 Southerners in the Sudanese Army have defected to the guerrillas since last spring.

The stakes are much higher than ever before because oil has been discovered in the South. Some reports speculate that Southern reserves may equal 5 billion barrels, although Chevron claims there are only 250 million. The oil discoveries mean that an independent South—a Nile Republic—could easily become a viable economic unit. Southerners argue that the decision by Nimeiry to lay a pipeline from the Bentiu oilfields to Port Sudan in the North—instead of building a refinery in the South—is yet another example of Khartoum's favoritism toward the North. The Anya Nya guerrillas have sworn that the pipeline will never be completed.

■ AUSTRALIA: The Sheraton Caper

"Good morning, Mr. Phelps: A hostage is being held by terrorists at the posh Melbourne Sheraton Hotel. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to free him."

That, roughly, was a real-life training exercise set up by the Australian Secret Intelligence Service. It was carried out by ASIS agents and trainees who burst into the hotel wearing horror masks and armed with machine guns and tear gas. The operation was designed to test the capabilities of the ASIS antiterrorist squad.

Unfortunately, no one at the hotel was told it was only a drill. So when Sheraton manager Nick Rice came upon a masked man smashing down a door with a sledgehammer, he wrestled with him. Rather than explain, the other ASIS agents freed their colleague, herded the hotel staff into the kitchen, menaced the guests with their machine guns and escaped. Two agents and three trainees were arrested by police before they got far, and were released after their credentials had been checked with ASIS.

Eventually, the Labor government admitted that twelve ASIS agents and trainees had been involved in the caper. The Victoria provincial Prime Minister told Parliament he would not tolerate people being terrorized in the heart of Melbourne. The police were instructed to demand the names of the seven other agents involved in the incident.

The federal government, under pressure from Victoria authorities, ordered ASIS Director General John Ryan to furnish the names. But the twelve agents won a high court injunction forbidding the release of the information, and in mid-December, Prime Minister Bob Hawke said that there could be "international repercussions" if the names were published. Later, Foreign Minister Bill Hayden said that one of the agents had taken the precaution of contacting ASIS operatives overseas who might suffer "unpleasant consequences" if the names were released. (It was later revealed that two of the men belonged to a division of the Australian Army, the Special Air Service, which was deeply involved with assassination squads during the Vietnam War.)

The incident was referred to a royal commission, headed by Justice Robert M. Hope. The commission's report on the Sheraton caper is scheduled to be released soon. In the meantime, the government has already cleaned house. Director General Ryan, who authorized the raid, has resigned, and his deputy, Steward Fry, has replaced him. The Victoria government says it will prosecute the agents. The Sheraton Hotel says it may sue the Secret Intelligence Service for damages.

■ EGYPT: A Bargain for the Coptic Pope

Every Christmas for the past three years the Egyptian Coptic community has hoped that its pope, Patriarch Shenoudah, would emerge from seclusion at the desert monastery of Wadi Natroun and celebrate the holiday mass in the Cairo cathedral. But Shenoudah has remained in the desert.

The Coptic pope is a strong-willed cleric, and he has had his difficulties with the secular authorities. He had a dispute with President Anwar el-Sadat over the number of churches the Copts would be allowed to build each year. Gamal Abdul Nasser had allowed twenty-five; Shenoudah bargained for and got fifty from Sadat. On September 3, 1981, when Sadat imprisoned over 1,500 religious and political leaders during a crackdown on all opposition groups, 170 Coptic priests and bishops were arrested. But Shenoudah, who was visiting the ancient monastery of Wadi Natroun at the time, was not touched. Two days later, Sadat suspended Shenoudah from his papal office and placed him under internal exile. When the President was assassinated on October 6, 1981, Bishop Saad Aziz Samweel, who had usurped Shenoudah's office, was among those killed at his side.

Since then, Shenoudah has been in limbo. President Hosni Mubarak has not forced another Patriarch on the church but neither has he lifted Sadat's order of internal exile. He has many reasons for leaving it in place. If the Copts, who make up 5 to 10 percent of the population, start demanding an end to their second-class status, the growing number of fundamentalist Moslems who want sharia instituted in Egypt might also be stirred up. Better to leave the troublesome Shenoudah in the desert.

A year ago a Coptic politician, Milad Hanna, assured Mubarak that if the ban on Shenoudah was lifted, he would tell Shenoudah that "he should stay in the monastery just the same—at least for some time." Mubarak declined the offer. But there is a tacit agreement between him and the Patriarch: in return for keeping out of sight, Shenoudah is allowed to administer all aspects of church affairs, including the selection of bishops and the assignment of priests. He is permitted as many visitors as he likes at Wadi Natroun. And, with notification to government security officers, Shenoudah may visit other remote monasteries.

"It is the second-best arrangement," says Hanna. "And in a cynical fashion, I think Shenoudah is actually quite happy in his desert exile. It adds to his charisma within the church and keeps him on top as a political issue here in Egypt and abroad."

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ARTICLES.

H-E-E-RE'S VLADIMIR!

The New Soviet Media Man

MICHAEL MASSING

Have the Russians entered the media age? In the past, the Russians who appeared on American television were invariably bearlike men, heavy in lid and jowl, who in gutteral English passionately invoked Lenin and mother Russia. No more. Regular viewers of ABC's *Nightline* have become acquainted with the new socialist TV man. He has a handsome European face and penetrating eyes. He speaks perfect English (American English) and frequently uses colloquialisms like "wait-and-see policy" and "sneak in through the back door." He presents his arguments with a reasonableness that is reassuring and a charm that can be disarming.

His name is Vladimir Pozner, and through his appearances via satellite on *Nightline*, he has become probably the most effective media emissary to the United States that the Soviet Union has ever had. Appearing opposite the likes of William Safire, George Will and Richard Pipes, Pozner usually manages to give as good as he gets. "He handles himself very well on his feet," says Ted Koppel, *Nightline*'s moderator. "For a live program like *Nightline*, he's probably the best they've got."

"Their other people are such jerks," says Anne Garrels, a former Moscow bureau chief for ABC. "[Pozner] is not a strange little K.G.B. guy. He seems very cosmopolitan, very friendly. He's an extremely charming man."

Robert Legvold, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, was impressed by Pozner's handling of questions about the downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007. "At the time people were seeing the Soviets as barbarians and liars," he says. "But here was a guy who looked like the fellow next door." The State Department is so wary of Pozner's persuasive powers that it has told *Nightline* that if it must use him, the producers should at least make sure he is pitted against worthy adversaries.

Pozner's effectiveness in reaching Americans rests on more than his command of English and his skill at oratory. He understands how Americans think. He avoids Marxist buzzwords like "imperialism," "neocolonialism" and "fraternalism," and stresses the similarities between the superpowers. He is tough without becoming combative, knowing when to hold his ground and when to take cover. He is funny, at times ironic, and he can appear indignant when it helps make his point. Above all, Pozner is so personable that he challenges many of the misconceptions others have about his country.

Michael Massing is a writer living in New York City.

Consider his observations during a *Nightline* discussion in November 1982, soon after the accession of Yuri Andropov. At the time, Americans believed Andropov harbored a secret admiration for the West.

> KOPPEL: One of the characteristics that we have heard described is that he is somewhat more urbane, perhaps, than his predecessors. Certainly he seems to know more about Eastern Europe and perhaps even the West because of his linguistic ability. Is it possible that therefore we can expect a man who will reach out more to the West?
>
> POZNER: Well, Ted, I think, in all fairness, that the late President Brezhnev reached out very much to the West, that there was a sincere desire on his part to improve relations. And if we go back to 1972 and the period when détente began, I think that was an exceptional example of reaching out to the West. Therefore I don't think that things such as knowledge of a foreign language or the fact that a person has lived in the East or in the West or somewhere are really basics. . . . Although you do have this particular kind of penchant for it, I don't think you should overemphasize the individual each time. It's always that, you know, Brezhnev as an individual, Andropov as an individual. Certainly they are human beings with their own particular qualities, but in this case we're speaking about people who are representing a country and a party, and I think that is what should be looked at first, and not the individual qualities.

Pozner's appearances on *Nightline* have made him popular. Last September he appeared on two network morning talk shows on the same day. He also participates in a weekly late-night radio talk show out of Los Angeles that is carried by ABC Radio. Pozner is scheduled to visit the United States in March (if the State Department grants him a visa) on a twenty-one-city lecture tour that will include radio and TV dates. For someone who is not even a government official, Pozner's visibility is extraordinary.

Who is Vladimir Pozner? He works as a commentator for Radio Moscow, the Soviet Union's external broadcasting service. Each day, Pozner prepares a five-minute commentary for the United States on everything from mothers-in-law to missile deployment. The job assures Pozner a place in the privileged elite of Soviet society. He is a regular on Moscow's cocktail circuit, where he mixes with Westerners. He frequently speaks to groups of American tourists and occasionally drops by the U.S. Embassy for showings of the latest American films. At Radio Moscow he regularly reads copy from the major U.S. wire services, as well as newsweeklies, the *International Herald Tribune*, *The Atlantic*, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* and *The Nation*. Pozner lives in a five-room duplex with his wife, Catherine, who is a magazine art director, and their two children.

If Pozner's credentials are decidedly mainstream, the path he took to obtain them is little short of remarkable. He was born in Paris in 1934 to a French mother and a Russian-Jewish father. His father worked for a French branch of M-G-M, starting as an electrician but moving rapidly up the ladder. When Vladimir was 3 months old, his mother

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took him to live in New York City. They returned to Paris at the outbreak of World War II. Pozner's parents joined the French underground briefly; then in 1940, they returned to New York.

Vladimir spent his formative years in Manhattan. At the age of 13 he enrolled in Stuyvesant High School, an elite public institution. Already a Marxist, like his father, Vladimir was not shy about talking politics, and he was often taunted by other students. His father, meanwhile, did quite well in capitalist America, eventually becoming head of M-G-M film distribution for Europe and Latin America and earning $25,000 a year—a grand sum in those days.

Then the McCarthy period set in, and Pozner's father, a Soviet citizen, had a rough time. M-G-M offered to help him get American citizenship, but he refused and was soon blacklisted. The family's phone was tapped, and friends, fearful for their own careers, began staying away. When the Soviet Union offered the senior Pozner a job in the movie industry in East Berlin in 1948, he accepted. In 1952 the family moved to Moscow.

As Stalin's reign was coming to an end, Vladimir entered Moscow University, where he majored in biology. He intended to become a scientist, but his facility with languages soon opened doors for him. Some of his Russian translations of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English verse caught the eye of prominent Soviet poet Samuel Marshak; in 1961, Pozner became his literary secretary. Soon after, he was offered a job at the newly created Novosti news agency and was launched, unexpectedly, on a journalism career. During the 1960s he worked as a magazine editor, putting in a stint as managing editor of *Sputnik*, the Soviet equivalent of *Reader's Digest*. In 1970, Pozner was offered a job at Radio Moscow.

While there, he met many Western correspondents. One of them was Charles Bierbauer, Moscow bureau chief for ABC News. Bierbauer was impressed with Pozner's English and his familiarity with America, so in early 1980 when *Nightline* sought a representative of the Soviet Union to discuss the invasion of Afghanistan, Bierbauer asked Pozner if he would appear on the program. Intrigued by the idea, Pozner gained the approval of his superiors and was beamed live from Moscow via satellite, providing millions of American viewers a firsthand Soviet interpretation of the invasion.

The Kremlin was pleased with his performance. "The Soviets are never quick to jump on anything," notes Anne Garrels, "but they quickly realized his value." So did ABC, which began regularly requesting him to appear on programs about the Soviet Union. He has been on *Nightline* nine times. Viewers probably would have seen him more often if *People* had not done a glowing profile of him in August 1981. "Quite to my surprise," he told an interviewer, "I've become a celebrity," which, he added, "seems to suit my people, and it seems to suit your people." As it turned out, he was only half right. The higher-ups in Moscow who approve Pozner's appearances apparently read *People*, and seem to have felt it was time to clip Pozner's wings. For more than a year after the article came out, Pozner was kept off *Nightline*, and even now ABC's requests for him are sometimes turned down by the State Committee on Television and Radio Broadcasting.

If Pozner's celebrity has caused him problems with his superiors, his views have not. Those who study his remarks for hints of deviation from the party line will come away frustrated. As Ted Koppel puts it, Pozner is a "very bright propagandist." Although he appears on *Nightline* as a private citizen, Pozner is a government employee and a member of the Communist Party.

What Pozner does is present Communism with a human face. During one solemn discussion of civil defense preparations, for instance, Pozner, intent on belittling their effectiveness, told a joke: "Question: What do you do when you see or hear a nuclear explosion? Answer: You wrap yourself in a white shroud and go slowly to the graveyard. Why slowly? So as not to create panic."

Although he is an atheist, Pozner has said, "I really hope to God" an arms race in space never happens. Even when denouncing Arkady Shevchenko, a well-known Soviet defector, who once appeared on a show with him, Pozner made his anger seem noble:

> Well, Ted . . . I'd like you to understand me quite clearly. I'm perfectly willing to speak to you and to Mr. Colby; I am not willing at all to discuss with that gentleman anything, first of all because I see the man as a traitor to his own country. He's a man who left behind his daughter, incidentally, who went to school with my son. . . . I cannot even imagine discussing anything, even the weather, with a person like that.

Above all, Pozner's eloquent presentation of his country's side of a question illustrates the new Soviet sophistication in communicating with Western audiences. Consider,

DRAWINGS BY M.G. LORD

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first, a practitioner of the old school, Joe Adamov, a colleague of Pozner's at Radio Moscow, who also speaks excellent English. During a *Nightline* program aired soon after the invasion of Grenada, George Will took a passing swipe at the Soviet move into Afghanistan, and Adamov could not help rising to the bait with a long, emotional response:

> You have bands, armed, trained, financed by the United States, sent in from Pakistan on the conveyor-belt system into Afghanistan, and I don't think Mr. Reagan denies this. He finances them, he even receives the heads of these bands in the White House. And that is why the Soviet forces are in Afghanistan. We've said time and again, had there . . . not been this American-financed and -trained and -organized aggression from the territory of Pakistan into Afghanistan, the Soviet troops would not have been in Afghanistan. And we said the moment that aggression from outside stops, the Soviet troops will leave Afghanistan.

Adamov went on to denounce America's "genocide" in El Salvador and its support for other "right-wing, extreme, dictatorial" regimes, going all the way back to Batista. Hardly the quickest way to an American's heart.

Pozner is too savvy to engage in such diatribes. Rather than attack the United States, he puts a benevolent face on Soviet behavior; where his case is weak, he often becomes evasive. Consider his statements on *Nightline* in December 1980, when Soviet troops were conducting maneuvers on the Polish border. Koppel asked why Moscow was so troubled by events in Poland. An Adamov would probably have launched an attack on Radio Free Europe and Solidarity's reactionary tendencies. Pozner took a different approach:

> Well, I think you have to realize that Poland is part of the socialist community. . . . and therefore the events that are occurring in Poland are naturally of great concern to that socialist community. I think that's absolutely logical.
>
> . . . I think that if you followed this closely you've seen that the Polish government and the Polish Communist Party have been extremely candid and frank in admitting the grave mistakes that were committed by the party which led to the economic chaos of Poland, which led to that entire movement, and to the creation or the formation of this union which no one sees as a threat.
>
> What is dangerous, and I believe that this again, if you're objective you can understand this, is that there's a limit to the kind of chaos that any country can survive.
>
> . . . The demands that the Polish workers first made, demands that were considered absolutely just and are considered absolutely just, are demands that cannot be satisfied right away. You can only give as much as you have, and to have, you have to produce. . . . The idea of striking every time something is refused can be a very dangerous one.

On the surface, that sounds reasonable. In this case, however, Pozner lost a round as William Hyland, former deputy director of the National Security Council, punched some holes in his argument. While conceding that Pozner "is an effective spokesman for the Soviet point of view," Hyland called attention to his "novel theory of alliance, in which, if you're a member of the so-called socialist community . . . it gives the Soviet Union the right to intervene in your internal affairs." Hyland also observed that Solidarity's goal of establishing an independent trade union extended far beyond the purely material issues that Pozner had referred to.

Pozner was at his best when he discussed the downing of the South Korean airliner. Koppel bluntly asked him to "explain to us the mentality" behind the decision to shoot down a plane in the absence of any evidence that it was engaged in espionage:

> POZNER: Here's a plane that has strayed supposedly not 10, not 15, not 20, and now nobody denies it, but 500 kilometers, and even up to 600 kilometers, inside Soviet territory, overflying Kamchatka with its top-secret nuclear bases there, and then going on further and flying over the . . . southern part of Sakhalin Island, which is also top secret. Now, this is something that the Japanese had to know as well as the Americans. And if there was any danger to this plane, and clearly there must be danger to a plane that would do that, there should be some kind of warning to the Soviets, to say, "Look, there's a plane going this way, it's a passenger plane, it strayed from course, but please be informed that there are 269 people aboard" and so on. And when Marshal Ogarkov was asked today [in a press conference in Moscow] if . . . the Soviet command had been aware of the fact that there were passengers aboard, would that have changed the course of events? And his answer to that—again, you have the tapes of the press conference—was yes.
>
> KOPPEL: Yes, but I find that somewhat less than compelling, because you're telling me now even after the plane is down, and Marshal Ogarkov is saying even after the plane is down, if it happened again, they'd shoot it down again.
>
> POZNER: No, he didn't put it that way at all.
>
> KOPPEL: He put it very much that way.
>
> POZNER: No, he didn't. He said that if there were a repetition of the same kind of thing again——
>
> KOPPEL: They would shoot the plane down.
>
> POZNER: Evasive action, two and a half hours of no answering, no confirmation, refusing to come into contact—in other words, simply ignoring the Soviet side—well, I think it's only—what would happen to a Soviet plane that did the same thing? . . .
>
> KOPPEL: It would either be escorted out of American airspace, as has been the case in the past, or it would be forced to land somewhere. Think of what a propaganda victory you could have scored if you'd been able to escort the spy plane down on Soviet territory.
>
> POZNER: Well, they certainly tried, for two hours; they tried to escort it down. You cannot force a plane down unless you sit on it.

In Pozner's comments, there is a recurring message: the Soviet Union is a peace-loving nation that cherishes cooperation and coexistence. Whether the subject is the K.G.B., Eastern Europe, the United Nations or the arms race, Pozner generally tries a soft sell. "There's going to be a continued effort in the pursuit of peace," he said soon after Andropov took power, "a continued effort in the pursuit of disarmament and limitation of strategic weapons; a continued effort to improve relations with the United States."

Pozner's value to Moscow in conveying that message might seem obvious, but for the traditionally reclusive Russians, his appearances signify a change of great significance.

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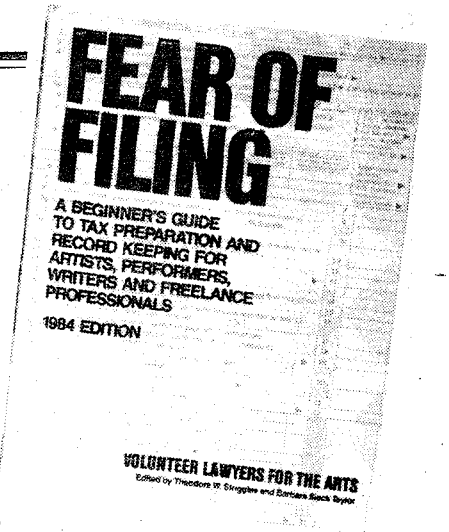
"There has been a virtual revolution in Soviet use of the media," says Ellen Mickiewicz, a Sovietologist at Emory University and author of *Media and the Russian Public*. The change, she says, is evident in a heightened "understanding of the importance of the media" and a "sensitivity to the audience they're addressing." Two striking examples of this were the press conferences held in Moscow after the K.A.L. incident by Marshal Ogarkov, a chief of the Soviet General Staff. Never before had such a high-ranking military officer appeared for questioning by Western reporters, many of whom were impressed by Ogarkov's polished performance. Likewise, in the last few years the Central Committee of the Communist Party has set up an international information office to cater to the foreign press corps.

To some extent, those developments represent a modest opening under Andropov. But longer-term forces are also at work. "Over the last ten or fifteen years, the Soviets have made an increasingly elaborate and sophisticated investment in learning as much about the structure of American society as they can," observes Daniel Matuszewski, associate director of the International Research and Exchanges Board, which coordinates academic exchanges between the United States and Soviet bloc countries. Until the late 1960s, he explains, most Soviet research on the United States consisted of primitive, tendentious tracts shot through with ideological biases. Then, with détente, the Russians realized the advantage they could gain by mastering Americana. So the government poured money into the Institute for the Study of the U.S.A. and Canada, where 350 specialists probe America's every facet, from the power of the Presidency to the despair of the homeless. (One American Sovietologist jokes that its knowledge of the United States is so great that "when I want to find out about the fine points of caucus rules in Missouri, I ask my colleagues at the U.S.A. institute to explain them.") The institute's work is complemented by other research bodies, such as the Institute for World Economic and International Relations, which has about 800 experts, many of them concentrating on U.S.-Soviet relations.

But the Soviet effort on America extends far beyond research. The staffs at these institutes in effect constitute a new generation of good-will ambassadors. Many speak excellent English, dress stylishly, are steeped in Western culture and are amiable conversationalists. They travel frequently to Europe and America, attending conferences, giving lectures, meeting with academic colleagues and appearing on television, where, like Pozner, they use a vocabulary Westerners relate to. (One of the most effective is the head of the U.S.A. institute itself, Georgi Arbatov.) "They have learned to be more sophisticated and less ideological," says Matuszewski. "While they have not dropped the ideology completely, it has become easier to talk with them."

There has been no corresponding trend in this country. In fact, the state of Soviet studies is at a nadir. America's response to détente was the opposite of the Soviet Union's: as the threat was perceived to recede, the Soviet Union became of less concern. China's star was rising, and Sinology became the "in" subject at graduate schools across the coun-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try. Under financial stress, many universities had to cut back, and Soviet studies often felt the knife.

By the time Ronald Reagan became President, the ranks of Kremlinologists in the United States had become severely depleted, with a scattered few experts at Harvard, Columbia and Stanford. "I wish we had as many people watching the Soviet Union as they do us," says Jonathan Sanders, assistant director of Columbia's W. Averell Harriman Institute for Advanced Study of the Soviet Union, which has only fourteen senior faculty members. The number of young people in the country who are expert in Soviet affairs "can be counted on one or two hands."

That situation may be changing. Sanders discerns a renewed interest in Soviet studies over the last year or two, and his group recently received more than $11 million from the Harriman family. The precipitating factor is the tension the Reagan Administration has injected into Soviet-American relations. As in the post-Sputnik years, only when America senses a threat from its chief adversary does it feel compelled to understand it. That boom-or-bust syndrome has taken a toll. As Sanders notes, "It takes longer to train a Soviet expert than it does to design a new weapons system." It seems, then, that we will suffer from myopia born of ignorance for years to come.

That's why Vladimir Pozner is so refreshing. At a time when Soviet viewpoints are generally excluded from the media, he forces Americans to confront their stereotyped images about life in the Soviet Union. As Pozner himself put it on *Nightline* last year, "It is impossible for us to talk to each other on the basis of good guys versus bad guys. For you, we're bad guys; for us, you're bad guys, if that's the way you look at it. . . . we have to talk to each other as equals." □

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ANGEL RAMA AND MARTA TRABA

A Latin American Odyssey Ends

BELL GALE CHEVIGNY

Last year, two prominent Latin American intellectuals living in the United States, Angel Rama and Marta Traba, were denied permanent residence status by the Immigration and Naturalization Service on political grounds which remained unexplained despite inquiry and protest. They left the country last spring and continued their work in Europe. On November 27, on their way to an international conference of artists and critics in Colombia, they died in the crash of a jumbo jet outside Madrid. To those who knew them, they were people of such vitality that their deaths defied belief.

Rama and Traba's lives were a hegira, marked by resistance and resilience so creative that they transformed political adversity and exile into sources of strength. Rama was perhaps Latin America's most highly regarded critic, theoretician and historian of literature. From 1958 to 1968 in his native Uruguay, Rama edited *Seminario Marcha*, a magazine known throughout Latin America. His articles about the extensive penetration of U.S. culture into the Southern Hemisphere strengthened his insistence that Latin America create an autonomous, idiosyncratic culture. "Ten Problems of the Latin American Novelist," his challenging analysis published in 1964, was studied by many writers who would figure prominently in the literary boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s. He became a vigilant analyst of the effects of the international literary marketplace on that complex cultural phenomenon.

Having taught at institutions throughout Latin America and Europe and at a dozen major universities in the United States, Rama was able to write with authority on the Latin American diaspora; for him that was as salient a feature of the late twentieth century as the migration of Europeans was in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In his criticism, Rama located the artist and the work in their social context, and in a provocative 1982 essay, he linked the political exile of intellectuals to the massive economic migrations occurring throughout the continent. With characteristic irony, he found benefit in loss: he thanked the dictators of the South for accelerating cultural exchange and unifying Latin Americans. While exiled writers have had to become custodians and defenders of their endangered cultures, he said, "they are also founding the Latin American literary community of the future." Thus, for Rama, the cultural incursions of the United States and the censorship and expulsions by the dictators helped to sharpen and consolidate

Bell Gale Chevigny, author of The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writing *(Feminist Press), teaches North and Latin American literature at SUNY-Purchase.*

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the Latin American intellectual's sense of identity.

Long before she met Rama, Marta Traba was moving toward some of his ideas in her own way. She left Peronist Argentina to study art in Europe, and in 1954 moved to Bogotá, Colombia, with her husband, Alberto Zalamea, a Colombian writer. At that time, the country was an artistic backwater; it had virtually no galleries or museums, and art criticism was largely backscratching. By the late 1950s she was establishing critical criteria and preaching abstract art in a country that seemed to understand only muralism. She appeared on a popular television series that brought the history of world art to viewers in the provinces. A Colombian painter called Traba "a cultural agitator in an epoch in which culture belonged to a closed circle." Through her university teaching she trained a generation of artists, and in her reviews she explained their work to the public she had sensitized. She also founded the first Museum of Modern Art in Colombia.

As her determination to uncover an authentic Latin American art grew, her criticism became increasingly polemical. "[Latin] America at present is a negation and an ambition," she wrote. "In our battle to become self-critical, we are pitted against the custodians of old myths, and determined to demolish lies and false myths without pity." In 1968, when she spoke out against the military occupation of National University, in Bogotá, President Carlos Lleras gave an order to expel her from the country, but a storm of protest forced him to revoke it. "The government expelled me and the country unexpelled me," said Traba.

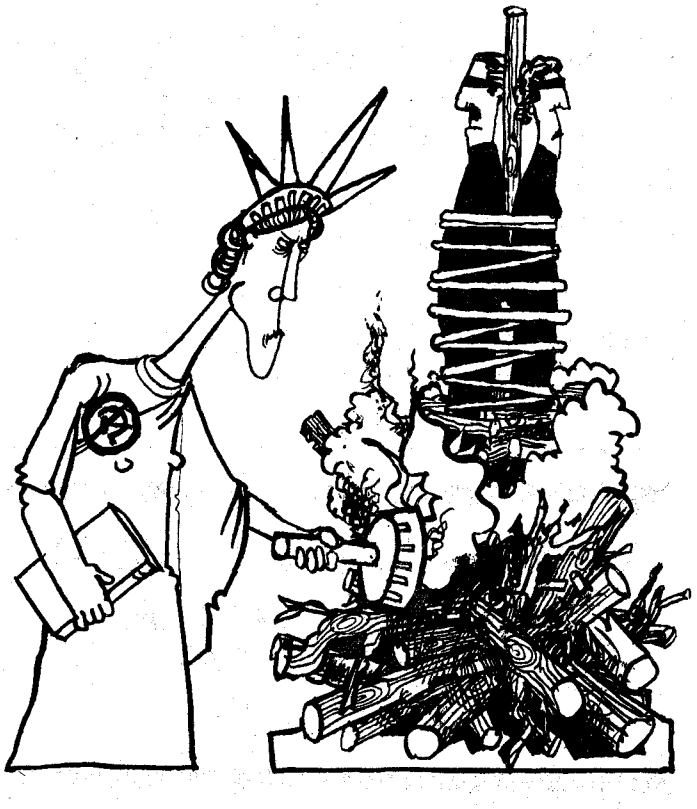
In Colombia she began writing fiction; her last novel, *Conversación al sur* ("Conversation in the South"), published in 1981, is informed by the kind of creative transformation that characterized Rama's essay on exile. Traba was moved to return in imagination to her native country after seeing reports of political "disappearances" in Argentina compiled by the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. The novel views this bizarre modern form of torture through the story of two women who are denied the certainty of death and the release of mourning, and so live in a kind of psychological exile. In talking to each other, they confront their losses and build a community for survival.

By 1969 Traba and Rama had met, fallen in love and committed themselves to what would be a life of wandering. Everywhere they settled, artists and scholars gravitated to them, and many research, writing and publishing projects were launched. During their two years in Puerto Rico, Traba, who had come to feel Latin American art was menaced as much by the imposition of foreign styles as by hidebound tradition, located in current art qualities that reflected Puerto Rico's political situation. In Venezuela from 1972 to 1978, Rama pursued activities that the Uruguayan dictatorship would have precluded. He launched a journal, *Escritura*, and became literary director of the celebrated Biblioteca Ayacucho, dedicated to publishing 500 volumes of Latin American literary classics, 100 of which had been completed by 1982.

Frequently invited to teach in the United States during the late 1970s, Traba and Rama began to feel at home here. Rama was awarded a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship in the spring of 1980, and the two of them joined the Princeton faculty that fall. In 1981, Rama began teaching full time as a tenured professor at the University of Maryland. He told friends he had found a nearly ideal home in the Library of Congress, where he was researching a cultural history of nineteenth-century Latin America. Traba, who was preparing a catalogue for the art museum of the Organization of American States, said she had rarely been as happy in a city as she was in Washington.

"Their presence among us was an incredible force," a friend in Maryland recalled. "Wherever they went, you sensed progress and movement." But Rama and Traba's untiring force met an insurmountable obstacle in the I.N.S., when it denied their applications for permanent residence. They were classified "excludable" under Section 212 (a) (28) of the McCarran-Walter Act, which can bar aliens alleged to adhere to communist, anarchist or terrorist doctrines from entering or remaining in the country. Rama never belonged to any party, and his politics could be measured by his admiration for the governments of Austria and Sweden and by his opposition to repression everywhere. When his visa was denied, he had just completed a series of articles on Soviet dissidents for the Venezuelan newspaper *El Universal*. A courteous man, Rama called the I.N.S.'s perception of his political beliefs "picturesque." Traba refused to engage what she considered a demeaning and futile battle. Rama pursued the matter, however, and learned that a "28" must prove he is innocent of charges that are not disclosed to him. He called the situation "Catch-28."

Nothing moved the I.N.S.: not the appeals of the University of Maryland, nor the objections of such organizations as PEN, the Authors League, Helsinki Watch and the Latin



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American Studies Association, nor the international outcry. Heaping absurdity upon absurdity, the I.N.S. suggested that Rama apply for defector status and recant procommunist views that he did not hold—a notion as outlandish as any contrived in the dictatorships to the south. Having received a Guggenheim Fellowship, he decided to go to Paris to pursue his research, not wishing to remain a hostage to a whimsical bureaucracy or become a "man of ceaseless litigation." Traba had received a grant to finish a study of Latin American art. She also planned to complete the trilogy begun by *Conversación al sur* with a second novel on life in exile and a third on the exile's return to a changed homeland. And so this couple, by turns urbane and volcanic, as legendary for their warmth and generosity as for their prodigious intellectual energy, packed their extraordinary library one more time.

On the eve of their departure, Belisario Betancur, the progressive President of Colombia, offered Traba citizenship and appealed personally to Ronald Reagan to help in Rama's case. By those civilized gestures, he laid bare the irrationality of ideological exclusion under U.S. immigration law. As Rama often pointed out, the I.N.S. had labeled as subversive Latin America's last three winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature: Miguel Angel Asturias, Gabriel García Márquez, and Pablo Neruda. The folly of denying any of them visas—even Neruda, the only Communist in the group—is patent. But one need not invoke examples of towering talents to argue against ideological exclusion. The treatment Rama and Traba received from the I.N.S. should generate two demands: that a provision guaranteeing due process for all aliens be included in the immigration reform bill now before Congress and that the ideological exclusion provision of the McCarran-Walter Act be repealed.

Those in the United States who care for Latin American culture have lost Rama and Traba twice in the same year; those who care for this country's culture feel shame for our government's error. We can do nothing about the death of this remarkable couple, though we may hope that their legacy is safe in the hands of hundreds of scholars and artists whose work was fired by their example. But we can in their name work to extirpate the repugnant laws that drove them from this country. □

Civil Rights

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

In 1981, President Reagan replaced two members of the six-member commission, and in 1982 he attempted, and failed, to replace three more. In 1983, he tried again but ran into resistance from senators who feared for the commission's autonomy and who hesitated to confirm Reagan's nominees. At that point, Senator Robert Dole took time out from worrying about the deficit and other pressing economic matters and tried to hammer out a compromise between the White House and the Senate. He failed to persuade the White House to give ground, however, and the Senate Judiciary Committee was set to pass a bipartisan measure on October 25 that would have expanded the number of members to eight, of whom six would be the incumbents. Two of the Administration's three nominees would fill the new slots. But the President decided to scuttle that initiative, peremptorily firing three Democratic commissioners who were serving until their successors could be confirmed.

Angered by Reagan's action, pro-civil rights senators led by Joseph Biden and Arlen Spector moved to bring the commission under the legislative branch by taking away the President's appointment power and vesting it in Congress. In early November that proposal had attracted fifty-five cosponsors, but the Senate faced deadlock on the question. The commission's authority was about to expire, and as the Senate was scheduled to adjourn in a few days, the measure was vulnerable to an eleventh-hour filibuster.

Once again Senator Dole intervened, despite his earlier statements that the commission's composition was "a Beltway issue" of limited national political and substantive importance. On November 10, with time running out, Dole told civil rights lobbyists he had an offer that they "couldn't refuse" and that he could persuade the Administration to accept. The Dole proposal called for an eight-member commission—four appointed by the President and four by Congressional leaders. The deal hinged on the selection of specific people as commissioners. Democratic Congressional leaders would reappoint Mary Frances Berry and Blandina Cardenás Ramiréz, two of the three outspoken commissioners whom Reagan had fired, and the House minority leader, Robert Michel, would reappoint Jill Ruckelshaus, a moderate Republican originally named by President Carter. Moreover, it committed Reagan to reappoint Mary Louise Smith, an Iowa Republican. Although she had been appointed by Reagan in 1981, Smith had taken positions contrary to the Administration's on issues before the commission.

Dole's compromise was acceptable to civil rights groups, which felt that because the President would appoint only half the members, the commission's independence would be preserved. Furthermore, Smith's reappointment would mean a 5-to-3 pro-civil rights majority on most issues. Late in the day, after several intercontinental telephone conversations with Edwin Meese 3d, who was with Reagan in Tokyo, Dole reported that all parties had agreed. A relieved Howard Baker went to the floor of the Senate and announced the compromise shortly after 1 A.M. on November 11. After token opposition was swept aside, the Senate approved a restructured commission by a 78-to-3 vote.

When Meese returned from Japan, he realized he had made a bad deal. Not only would the Administration lack a majority on most substantive issues to be considered by the commission, it would probably fail to secure reappointment of Clarence M. Pendleton Jr. as chairman and Linda Cha-

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vez as staff director. The new law required that a majority of the commissioners approve the President's nominations for the two posts. To make matters worse, anonymous White House aides had made statements to the press critical of Meese's handling of the affair, charging him with bungling another civil rights issue and needlessly antagonizing blacks and Hispanics.

Meese took decisive action. Although the President signed the reauthorization bill, the White House announced that he would not reappoint Mary Louise Smith because she had failed to support the Administration on key votes. Vice President Bush later acknowledged that Smith was also in disfavor because she would not promise to vote for Pendleton and Chavez. The White House then persuaded Representative Michel to renege on his pledge to appoint Jill Ruckelshaus and instead to name Robert Destro, an anti-abortion activist who had been one of Reagan's nominees in 1981 and 1982, but who had been ditched by the Administration as part of the compromise.

The Administration had prevailed in its effort to control the commission—but at some cost. When Bush appeared before a meeting of Republican women legislators in early December, he encountered a hail of protests over the refusal to reappoint Mary Louise Smith. In Smith's home state, the Republican governor's press secretary reported that "people here were shocked, especially Republican women." The consensus among Iowa G.O.P. members was that the party had been hurt and the re-election chances of Senator Roger Jepsen, a Reagan stalwart, had been impaired.

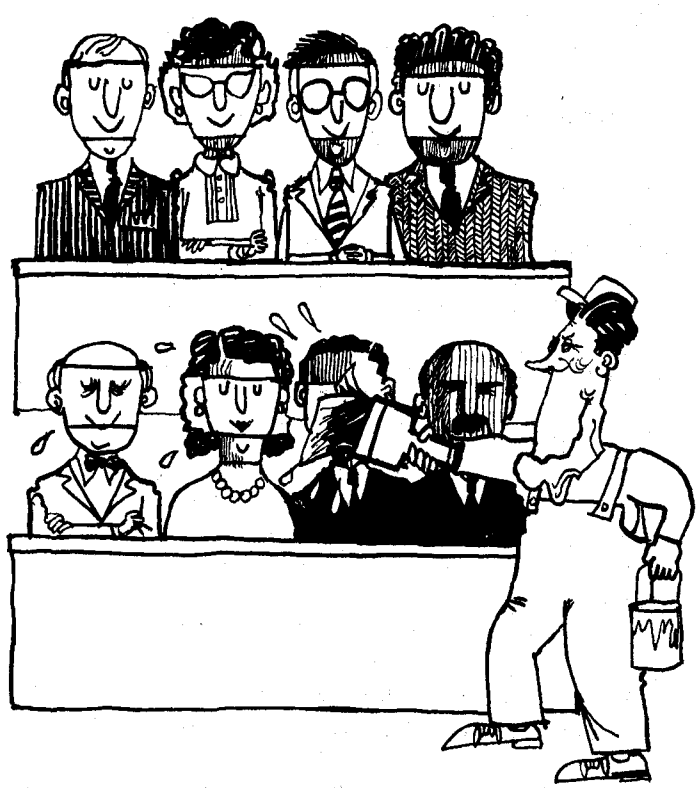
Beyond its impact in widening the gender gap, the Administration's action may have damaged the credibility of its "good word," one of the most important tools in the political process. While Senator Dole made a halfhearted defense of the Administration ("I don't know if you can say we had a firm commitment from the White House"), he and other legislative leaders are unlikely to accept oral assurances from Reagan aides so readily in the future.

All that high and low political drama centered on a body whose $11.8 million budget is less than that of a medium-size bureau in most Federal agencies. The commission distributes no Federal funds and has no enforcement power beyond that of compelling the attendance of witnesses at its public hearings. Although it has been investigating and exposing discrimination for twenty-five years, its name is hardly a household word. During the recent controversy, more than one member of Congress repeatedly referred to it as the Civil Service Commission, a mistake commonly made during the 1960s, when I served as staff director.

So, to paraphrase Gilda Radner's Emily Litella, "What's all this fuss about the Civil Service Commission?" Why did the issue engage such high-level attention and why was the Reagan Administration willing to expend so much political capital to gain control of a relatively obscure bureaucracy? The answers, it seems to me, lie in the methods and philosophy of the Administration and in the continuing hold of the race question on American society.

The Reagan Administration has been more successful than any other Administration in the last two decades in suffusing the Federal establishment with its ideology. No agency with the slightest involvement in social welfare or reform programs is exempt from attempts to restaff it and reorient its activities along White House-approved lines. Even while the Administration was completing its coup at the Civil Rights Commission, it continued its efforts to destroy the Legal Services Corporation. It got rid of the too-liberal president of the Inter-American Foundation, a small development-grant agency, by installing an Administration loyalist from California on the board of directors, thus creating a pro-Reagan majority. As the year ended, a moderate veteran Republican Congressman lamented privately that Jim Baker-type pragmatists were being replaced throughout the government by Ed Meese-type ideologues. At the same time, spokesmen for the American Heritage Foundation, which in 1980 furnished the Reagan transition team with a detailed road map to the Federal establishment, praised the Administration for its success in purging the bureaucracy of liberalism, and predicted that the impact of its actions would last long after a second Reagan Administration.

Besides being an example of the Administration's appetite for establishing complete control of the Federal bureaucracy, its fight to take over the Civil Rights Commission was a response to the tenacious grip that issues of race have on American society. The white men who make and execute civil rights policy for Ronald Reagan are zealously trying to reverse the laws and policies of the past two decades. Behind their efforts to undermine affirmative action, school desegregation and the Voting Rights Act, and in the process narrow prevailing interpretations of civil rights law, lies an ill-concealed anger at legislative, judicial and past executive actions that they believe have changed the rules of the game. They feel that the merit system is under attack and that



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white males have become the beleaguered and discriminated against minority.

But in seeking to alter drastically the policies they inherited, the President's men understand they face a difficult problem. An increasing number of people in this country view discrimination as counter to American ideals, and if the Administration is perceived as unfair or insensitive to minority rights, it will alienate not only members of minority groups but fair-minded whites as well.

Consequently, the challenge from the Administration's perspective is to change policy without appearing to do so. Thus, the penchant of Reagan officials for citing statements by Martin Luther King Jr. and Roy Wilkins that the Administration claims support its position. Thus, Reagan's professions that he was fighting for civil rights before there was a civil rights movement—indeed, as he tells it, before he ever knew there was a race problem in this country.

Control of the Civil Rights Commission is important to the Reaganites because, while it is little known and lacks political clout, it has played an important role over the years in establishing the norms of conduct by which government actions are judged. In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s the commissioners were generally prestigious white men of moderate to conservative bent who came to their assignments without much prior involvement in civil rights. After they had immersed themselves in the facts, they were shocked by the pervasiveness of racial injustice, and their voluminous reports and strongly worded recommendations reflected this. While events more than words changed the public climate in the 1960s, the commission's recommendations were translated into legislation. For example, its call for strong Federal supervision of state voting procedures became the foundation for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In the 1970s more minority and women commissioners were appointed. As the commission increased its involvement in the mechanisms of civil rights enforcement, its image became less that of a disinterested blue-ribbon panel than that of a body of civil rights professionals. Its detailed reports on failures in Federal enforcement of the civil rights laws continued to be factually irrefutable and to focus attention on the gap between professed goals and practice. Further, under the leadership of Republican Arthur Flemming, the commission played the role it had under his predecessors, Theodore Hesburgh and John Hannah, providing a bipartisan consensus that much had to be done to right the historical wrongs suffered by minority groups in the United States.

It is this consensus that the Administration seeks to break by politicizing the commission. It hopes that the reconstructed commission will replace the old norms with new ones, under which remedial measures for past discrimination are themselves held to be discriminatory, and the definition of civil rights issues is tightly circumscribed. At its meeting on January 16, the commission voted 5 to 3 to follow staff director Chavez's recommendations to cancel a study on the impact of cutbacks in financial aid on black and Hispanic college students, because budgetary matters were beyond the purview of the commission. As other constraints are imposed and the commission relaxes its scrutiny of Federal agencies, the Administration expects to have a freer hand in revamping civil rights policy.

Is there a chance that the new commission will surprise its patrons? Some observers have suggested that once the new members are exposed to the facts of injustice, they will exercise independent and critical judgment, in the way that conservative appointees to the Supreme Court sometimes become more liberal after they are on the bench. That seems an unlikely prospect. The center of influence on the new commission seems to be a group of neoconservative Democrats—Morris B. Abram, a lawyer, John H. Bunzel, a fellow of the Hoover Institute, and Linda Chavez, a protégé of American Federation of Teachers president Albert Shanker. Chavez has missed no opportunity to proclaim her loyalty to the Reagan Administration, telling a reporter in November that she supported U.S. military ventures in Grenada and Lebanon and noting that "Hispanics traditionally have been strong supporters of defense." Last year she predicted that the commission would reverse its predecessors' policies on affirmative action and school desegregation. Bunzel has written strident articles for *The Wall Street Journal* and other publications, denouncing affirmative action, busing and voting-rights legislation, and attacking civil rights groups that support those measures.

As for Abram, more than two decades ago he earned a reputation as a legal advocate for reapportionment and other civil rights causes, but for the last few years he has single-mindedly assaulted goals and timetables and other numerically based remedies for past discrimination by lumping them together as "quotas." Interestingly, Abram has made an exception to his attack on quotas. He represents the developer of a New York City apartment complex, Starrett City, where the number of minority-group tenants is limited by a "benign" quota, which the N.A.A.C.P. has challenged in court. Abram explains that he is merely representing a client in that case and that the views he espouses are not necessarily his own. But the major distinction between the quotas that Abram is defending in the lawsuit and those he has attacked is that the former limit minority participation while the latter seek to expand it.

At his confirmation hearing, Abram went down the line with the Administration. On some issues, such as the impact of desegregation on educational achievement, he expressed confident opinions in support of the Administration despite an apparent lack of knowledge of the facts. On the Administration's support of legislation to curb the jurisdiction of Federal courts in civil rights cases, a position widely condemned by conservative and liberal lawyers, Abram professed ignorance. In dealing with controversial issues Abram's style is confrontational. His unwillingness to accommodate other views has created havoc on boards of directors of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and the Field Foundation.

Soon after his appointment was announced, Abram modestly allowed that his participation and that of the other Reagan appointees would raise the intellectual level of the

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commission. Maybe so, but based on his performance in the Starrett City affair and at the confirmation hearing, integrity and intellectual curiosity appear to be separate from intellectual ability.

Thus, the outlook for a commission marked by compassion, free inquiry and independent judgment is a bleak one. Staff members, alumni and friends of the commission can take some solace from the fact that the body had a good run, that it retained its vitality and sense of mission much longer than most Federal bureaucracies and that at the end, it did not go gentle into that good night.

One final source of consolation is that the Administration, while trashing the commission, may find it more difficult to impair the twenty-five-year consensus that minorities, women, disabled people and others deserve an equal chance to prove their worth. Congress, the press, civil rights organizations and other institutions will have to take up the watch abandoned by the newly constituted commission. But history shows that the idea of equality dies hard and that new resources often spring up to meet continuing needs. □

MINORITY REPORT.

(*Continued From Page 118*)

panic many highly paid staff members into resigning and to reduce the editorial team by 80 of its 336 members. But he wanted to keep columnist Mike Royko, and he lost him. In his bid for Warner Communications he showed his neurotic side too early and spoiled staff relations before he achieved full control. Then he accused Warner executives of fraud.

Murdoch came for a round of meetings at the *Sun-Times* offices last November 1, the day after the paper published his now-traditional Letter of Intent, which gave the customary assurances about upholding the integrity and the traditions of the paper. (The letter was actually composed by Marshall Field's lawyers, which makes it more ominous still.) Murdoch told the editorial staff that their paper was "dull," that the makeup needed more "color" and that the stories required "human interest." Pressed to define a human interest story, he suggested items about readers who had scored successes with their classified advertisements in the *Sun-Times*. When asked if he wanted the paper to look more like the *New York Post*, Murdoch became defensive. He had no such intention, he replied, though he thought the *Post* a much better newspaper than the *Sun-Times*. Later, at a dinner with selected staff members, he blustered about his dislike of journalists as opposed to "newsmen." Too many people, he declared, were writing for journalism schools. He wanted something less "prissy." Meanwhile, his sidekick, George Viles, marched around the production departments, saying at the top of his voice, "There sure are a lot of people here."

All that was standard Murdoch procedure. So were his other unnerving tactics, such as dashing off to his mansion in Aspen on short notice, missing appointments and showing up at the paper's offices unannounced. *Sun-Times* managing editor Gregory Favre was invited for a powwow at Murdoch's gruesome New York headquarters. After being kept waiting he was interviewed by the boss between telephone calls to Warner Communications. Murdoch congratulated Favre on his decision to stay on, a decision he had not yet made but had come to New York to discuss. Murdoch went through a copy of the *Sun-Times* page by page, muttering, "That's got to go. . . . that's no good. . . . this is hopeless" at every brusque turn. Finally, the genial proprietor told Favre, "I understand you don't have any political views—that's the kind of editor I like."

The alternate douches of hot and cold water, typical of the despotic personality, are bad enough. But it would be almost reassuring if that last statement of his was true. Alas, as somebody once commented, there are two things wrong with Rupert Murdoch: his face. After various dilettantish commitments, he is now a hardened and avowed right-wing populist. The Washington correspondent of the *New York Post* and the White House have been told that Jerome Watson, *Sun-Times* award-winning Washington correspondent, is not long for this world. Too liberal. Roger Wood, another figure in the Murdoch bestiary, has been saying that the editorial page of the *Sun-Times* is too leftist. As Harold Evans realized too late, Murdoch's specialty is "the lobbying associated with business that depends on government favor." Our Rupert is betting on an extension of the Reagan years.

Sooner or later, all newspaper tycoons go bananas. Adolph S. Ochs, founder of *The New York Times*, said that no man is big enough to run more than one newspaper. Murdoch has defied the rule for a while now, but he is beginning to unravel. His Fleet Street predecessors all went nuts before their empires were anything near the size of his. In his novel *Scoop*, Evelyn Waugh personified, in the character of Salter, the wretched lot of an underling who works for a megalomaniac, Lord Copper of the *Daily Beast*:

> As he drove out to Lord Copper's frightful mansion he thought sadly of those carefree days when he had edited the Women's Page or, better still, when he had chosen the jokes for one of Lord Copper's comic weeklies. It was the policy of the Megalopolitan to keep the staff alert by constant changes of occupation.

Some conservative apologists can be heard saying that Murdoch is the sort of tycoon that journalism needs: irreverent, ebullient, bringing a breath of fresh air to the business. If only there were some truth in this laissez faire babble. No conservative who has worked for Murdoch (and Harold Evans supported Thatcher) would dream of repeating the experience. Murdoch is on record as saying, "It is no fun running newspapers; the fun is in owning them." He has a lugubrious sense of fun. There may come a day when it is thought abnormal for moneyed individuals to buy and sell the press as they once bought and sold human beings, coal mines and railroads. That time seems a lamentable distance away. In the interim, Rupert Murdoch stands out as a barbarian. □

Note: Christopher Hitchens is a columnist for Rupert Murdoch's Times Literary Supplement.

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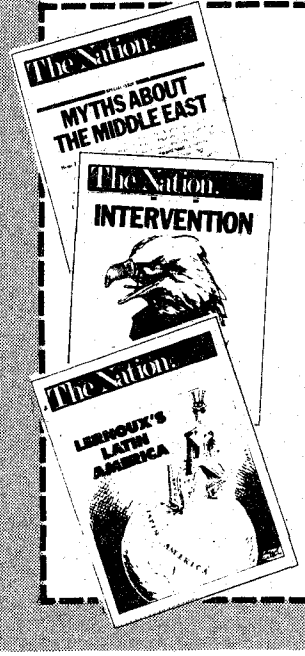

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Workers at Play

MAURICE ISSERMAN

EIGHT HOURS FOR WHAT WE WILL: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920. *By Roy Rosenzweig. Cambridge University Press. 304 pp. $29.95.*

When radical intellectuals in the 1950s got depressed, they thought about Joe McCarthy; when they got really depressed, they thought about "mass society." In 1957 Richard Hoggart, a British literary critic, published a book titled *The Uses of Literacy: Changing Patterns in English Mass Culture* that traced the decline of the old insular culture of English working-class neighborhoods. Hoggart carefully distinguished between political class-consciousness and the "sense of community" formerly shared by English workers. But he argued that, at the very least, traditional working-class culture had sustained an ethic of mutual aid, arising

> chiefly from a knowledge, born of living close together, that one is inescapably part of a group, from the warmth and security that knowledge can give, from the lack of change in the group and from the frequent need to "turn to a neighbor" since services cannot often be bought. It starts from the feeling that life is hard, and that "our sort" will usually get "the dirty end of the stick."

Television, tabloids, cheap fiction and even cheaper ideas were undermining the old ethic and the sense of a world divided into "them" and "us." "Class culture," Hoggart concluded, "is being eroded in favour of the mass opinion, the mass recreational product and the generalised emotional response."

On this side of the Atlantic, William J. Newman commented in a 1958 essay in *Dissent* on the issues raised by Hoggart's book:

> The political significance of British working-class life lies in its family and neighborhood relationships which have been or can be generalized to a whole society. [Socialism] comes from making the best aspects of working-class culture into an ideological goal. [When] the working-class way of life disappears the moral source of socialism may disappear too.

The parallels with American political life were easy to draw: Joe McCarthys could come and go; *I Love Lucy* was here to stay. Every new television antenna on the roof of a working-class home seemed to drive another nail into the coffin of the American left's chances for political revival.

In the 1960s the New Left inherited the old left's concern with the politically debilitating consequences of mass society without inheriting its concern for appealing to a working-class constituency. Herbert Marcuse, a bridge between two generations on the left, concluded gloomily in *One-Dimensional Man* (1964) that under advanced capitalism the working class had become simply another "prop of the established way of life." By decade's end many New Leftists had decided that the "domestic imperialism" of consumer/mass media conditioning could be overthrown by an act of revolutionary will on the part of the still salvageable young. Tom Hayden declared in *The Trial* (1970) that he had seen the future and it looked a lot like Berkeley:

> It is possible to go anywhere in America and find the section of town inhabited by the dropouts, the freaks and the radicals. It is a nationwide network of people with the same oppression, the same institutions and language, the same music, the same styles, the same needs and grievances: the very essence of a new society taking root and growing up in the framework of the old.

(That passage is easy to find in my copy of *The Trial*: it is heavily underscored in red ink, and someone has inscribed in the margin, in what appears to be my handwriting, RIGHT ON TOM. Apparently Hayden was not alone in cherishing illusions about the significance of "revolutionary youth culture.")

One of the things salvaged from the wreckage of the debate over mass society is an abiding interest among younger historians, many of them veterans of the New Left, in the question of how the culture of subordinate groups (slaves, workers, women) prepares them for or diverts them from protest and resistance. Roy Rosenzweig, a historian at George Mason University, makes this question the center of his investigation of the lives of working-class residents of Worcester, Massachusetts, at the turn of the century, *Eight Hours for What We Will: Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City, 1870-1920.* Unlike the towns of Lawrence, Lynn and Lowell, those perennial favorites of labor historians, Worcester was a pretty tame place. Big Bill Haywood and the I.W.W. never came to town to lead a strike (Emma Goldman did come to Worcester in 1892—to open an ice cream parlor—but soon decided she could do more for the class war in another pursuit and another location). Even the conservative A.F.L. unions had a hard time organizing there: P.J. McGuire, founder of the Carpenters Union, undiplomatically told a meeting of Worcester's unionists in 1889 that their city "has been known for years as one of the scab holes of the state."

Worcester's labor history will never be celebrated in song and poster. Nothing extraordinary ever happened there. But Rosenzweig, through a careful scrutiny of the ordinary, reveals that Worcester's workers had a finely developed sense of a world divided between them and us:

> The failure of Worcester trade unions and the virtual absence of radical or working-class political parties did not give the city's industrialists an unchallenged hegemony over all aspects of working-class life. Instead, Worcester workers created tight ethnic communities with elaborate organizational infrastructures—churches, clubs, kinship networks, saloons—which served as alternatives to trade unions and political parties. These ethnic communities offered Worcester workers a sphere in which they could carry out a mode of life and express values, beliefs, and traditions significantly different from those prescribed by the dominant industrial elite.

As the factory came to dominate the working hours of nineteenth-century workers, the saloon became the center of their lives in the hours they had left over. The new industrialists no longer tolerated the relaxed working habits (characterized by frequent breaks for

Maurice Isserman, who teaches history at Smith College, is writing a history of the American left of the 1950s, to be published by Basic Books.

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ale or grog) of preindustrial culture. By rule and example, they hoped to persuade their employees to live their lives according to the maxims of Benjamin Franklin. In vain. When open consumption of alcohol was forced from the workplace, it found a new home in the saloon. Rosenzweig offers a sympathetic portrait of a much-maligned institution:

> Public toilets, food, warmth, clean water, meeting space, check-cashing services, newspapers—often otherwise unavailable to workers in the late nineteenth-century city—could be found free of charge in the saloon. Often the saloon served as a communications center, a place where workers picked up their mail, heard the local political gossip, or learned of openings in their trade.

The fact that in Worcester, as in so many other nineteenth-century American cities, the teetotaling employers were native-born Protestants, while the hard-drinking workers were immigrant Catholics, did nothing to defuse the antagonisms created by the "drink question." Rosenzweig recounts how Worcester's workers transformed the once-decorous Fourth of July celebrations into boisterous expressions of ethnic solidarity ("Liquid patriotism," one Yankee newspaper sneered in reference to the workers' July Fourth exuberance).

Worcester's workers and employers inhabited different cultural worlds: they attended different churches, belonged to different fraternal groups, spent their leisure hours in different pursuits and observed their holidays in different fashions. The values associated with Worcester's working-class culture were more egalitarian than those of the dominant culture, and stressed mutual aid rather than individual advancement. Such values, Rosenzweig suggests, were the product of an "alternative" rather than an "oppositional" culture. There was little chance that nineteenth-century workers in Worcester would follow William J. Newman's formula and transform "the best aspects of working-class culture into an ideological goal." They conceded control of the workplace to their employers; what they demanded in return was the right to spend their time outside the factory as they chose. Thus, Rosenzweig concludes, "The nineteenth-century ethnic working-class saloon . . . was a form of both accommodation and resistance to the capitalist order."

In the early twentieth century new forms of commercial recreation—the movies, the amusement park—supplanted the saloon and the community picnic as favored pastimes among Worcester's workers. The old neighborhood-based ethnic working-class culture could not compete with the allure of Rudolph Valentino and the roller coaster. Having avoided the temptation to romanticize the revolutionary potential of nineteenth-century working-class culture, Rosenzweig refrains from a similarly one-sided reading of the impact of "mass culture." True, moviegoing could be a socially isolating experience and many movies preached the value of individual acquisitiveness; after an initial period of uncertainty, Worcester's employers decided that the movies offered no threat to public morality or work discipline and, as a result, "working-class recreation declined as an arena of social conflict."

But Worcester's workers were not transformed by the new mass amusements into a crowd of passive and atomized consumers. Just as revolutionary cultures cannot be conjured up through an act of will on the part of political vanguards, neither will a conservative consumer culture necessarily be the end product of exposure to the products of Hollywood and Madison Avenue. Rosenzweig ends *Eight Hours for What We Will* by observing:

> Workers who had spent their time in the movie theater in the 1920s might find their way to the union hall in the 1930s and 1940s, as they sought to achieve what the movies promised but the larger society failed to deliver. . . . Having already made the transition from the rum shop to the Rialto, at least some workers now made the more important and more difficult shift from the cinema to the C.I.O. □

"BLIND MINOTAUR GUIDED BY A LITTLE GIRL IN THE NIGHT"
—PICASSO

The night is neither inhospitable
nor holy, with stars arranged, not in signs
or crosses, so much as crosses crossed out,
as though the constellations were a chart
of our corrections: all we wished we could believe.

Outside the myth the minotaur is blind.
The maze was all he saw: a fleet arrived
the youth and virgins knew the way inside,
and knew there was none out. The whole exchange
took place on faith, *was* faith—he had no need to see.

Still the minotaur tilts his eyes skyward.
What he cannot see is what the child can:
darkness or simply nothing, fabled with stars.
But the barefoot girl is looking backward
—apparently it's not forbidden.

It seems the past is all she guides him toward,
his own story she could read outloud each night.
Her hair is delicate as the dove
nested in her arms. Maybe it will bring
a sign from where they're bound, or where they've been.

Something green enough for hope. Much later
it may cross the sky and reappear, a star.
Certainly she's young enough to wish.
The others present are yet unobserved:
a boatswain gathering a weathered net

with proof of where he's been, a gondolier
whose slender pole will guide him safely back,
and someone else, considering all this,
chin in one hand, elbow in the other,
(a poet, no doubt) clustering the stars

into a bird, a bull of sorts, a child—
the blind were always piloted by children.

Michael J. Rosen

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The Russia That Wasn't

TIMOTHY SERGAY

THE ISLAND OF CRIMEA. *By Vassily Aksyonov. Translated by Michael Henry Heim. Random House. 369 pp. $16.95.*

"Every Russian schoolboy," Vassily Aksyonov writes in the preface to *The Island of Crimea*, "knows that Crimea is connected to mainland Russia by an isthmus, but not even every adult knows how flimsy an isthmus it is. When a Russian rides along it for the first time and sees it for its narrow, swampy self, he can't quite suppress a seditious 'what if.' What if Crimea really were an island?"

In this intricate political satire of Soviet bureaucratism, espionage and decadence, at once reverent toward the Russian spirit yet haunted by the question of its sadomasochism, Aksyonov proposes that a remnant of the White Volunteer Army successfully defended this island of Crimea against the Reds in 1920 and consequently founded "a Russian, yet Western, democracy alongside the totalitarian mainland." The island nation enjoys healthy trade and political relations with the West, where it is popularly known as "OK," from its Russian name, Ostrov Krym. A capitalist economy flourishes; a provisional Duma is still in power; a liberal press and multipartisan political activism are legitimate and thriving. Disdained and unrecognized by the Kremlin, Crimea is in effect the Soviet Union's Westernized doppelgänger, in which survivors of the old guard and their descendants consider themselves true Russians; bureaucracies ignore embarrassing realities, cling to empty ritual and suppress genuine talent; and high operatives in the secret service are familiar with their opposite numbers in the K.G.B.

Aksyonov's hero, Andrei Luchnikov, son of a White cadet, is a 46-year-old playboy, international media personality and publisher of Crimea's leading liberal newspaper. Luchnikov (his name is from the Russian for "ray," as in "ray of hope") believes Crimea's sanest course for long-term survival lies in political reunification with the Soviet Union; reunification also promises an overdue acknowledgement of the two nations' shared cultural identity, and the chance to infuse stultified Russia with Crimean "guts." Despite assassination threats and surveillance from both nations' secret services, Luchnikov pursues his idea through his newspaper, international alliances, a promotional entrance in a dangerous auto rally and covert meetings with Soviet leaders in luxurious surroundings ("The twilight of the Third Rome: Finnish baths under lock and key"). He organizes a popular pro-reunification movement, the Common Fate League (S.O.S., in its Cyrillic initials), which finally overcomes Soviet reluctance to absorb Crimea and achieves a catastrophic success: full-scale invasion by the Soviet military and the ultimate routing of the White Army. Surrounded by lunatic violence, Luchnikov, like Rubashov in *Darkness at Noon*, suffers a shocking shift in perspective, from the millennial to the immediate and delicately human:

> Suddenly all history, philosophy, and politics went up in smoke, and he felt like a blob of protoplasm, a pitiful barely living organism, a mere receptacle for something quivering, thirsting for protection.

For Luchnikov and Rubashov, repentance comes too late.

Although the jacket copy promises "a hilarious, ribald, lusty caper," *The Island of Crimea* is complex, long and increasingly somber. There are some good laughs—a cynical treatment of Soviet ideological blather at a Unesco conference, some foiling-the-K.G.B. high jinks following Luchnikov's disappearance from Moscow—but the novel is hardly a romp. Its ribaldry derives from the disturbing treatment of women: "Luchnikov sighed and thought to himself that he'd always preferred whores to their respectable sisters and liked Krystyna more as she was now than in her puritan guise." The female characters barely exist outside a context of promiscuity and prostitution. Tatyana Lunina, Luchnikov's ex-wife and the most sympathetic female character, prostitutes herself for $300 in a moment of morbid caprice to a lusty old tycoon, later to regret it, later still to run off with him. Her successor in Luchnikov's love life, Krystyna Sage, is immolated during the invasion in a random attack, while she is standing at the head of Crimea's first gas-station queue. Ak-

Timothy Sergay is a freelance writer and editor living in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

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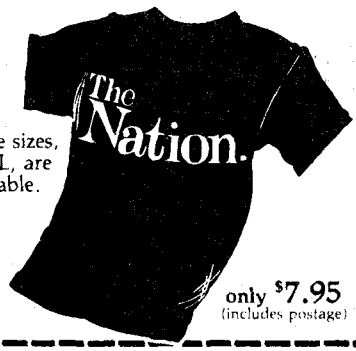

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syonov writes the scene on several levels: it is the emotional tragedy that finally unhinges Luchnikov, a black joke on the decrepit Soviet consumer economy and an allegorical crucifixion. Luchnikov carries Krystyna—note the name—Pietà-fashion to Saint Vladimir's Cathedral, where he lays her, shrouded, at the feet of a priest. Sometimes Aksyonov seems to be presenting his male characters' Madonna/whore mentality as an aspect of their decadence; other times he seems to share it. Either way, it is never fun.

The tone of the novel, created largely by its perception of history, is one of deepening menace: a constant assassination threat; a mortally treacherous roadway; history as "a gigantic, sleek and senseless shark," "the bitch, the Why and Wherefore"; a resignation to devouring absurdity. Luchnikov appeals repeatedly and hopelessly to God; in his final hysteria, he attributes the whole catastrophe to Hollywood:

> It's all one big location! . . . *The Longest Day*, *Apocalypse Now*—they pall in comparison. . . . It's brilliant, brilliant! Everything about it. Those ships, those planes—it must have cost a fortune! And I bet you're all having a good laugh at my expense! I bet you're shooting me at this very moment. A mad scene among the ruins.

Aksyonov's novel includes a number of themes present in the work of another expatriate Soviet author, Alexander Zinoviev. (Random House has published his huge political satire, ***The Yawning Heights***, and its sequel, ***The Radiant Future***, in English translations by Gordon Clough.) Luchnikov's article on Stalinist dementia and the post-revolutionary triumph of mediocrity ("the gradual but eventually overwhelming takeover by incompetents and nonentities") will sound familiar to Zinoviev's readers. The Soviet Union is represented allegorically in ***The Yawning Heights*** as Ibansk, a "nonexistent" nation inhabited by bodiless abstractions of official ideology. Ibansk has its own Western doppelgänger culture in Sub-Ibansk, which occupies its sewers, feeding on waste while negotiating détente, space treaties and a trans-Ibanskian urine pipeline with the Ibanskian government.

Both authors attribute the Soviet Union's peculiar decadence to the Russian people and not to the actions of a ruling elite or to totalitarianism per se. They do so in different ways, however. Zinoviev writes literary dramatizations of sociological theory. In ***The Yawning Heights*** he writes that Soviet afflictions are the result of certain universal laws of social existence: "Less give and more take, less risk and more profit; less responsibility and more kudos; less dependence on others, greater dependence of others on oneself, and so on." Zinoviev's concern is with the consequences of a general human nature. Aksyonov affirms the philosophically conservative idea of national character:

> But if we [Crimean Russians] seem to lean in the same direction, could it be that totalitarianism is not the whole answer, that our national character had something to do with it as well? Ah, the Russian character. And a very distinct character it is, too. What other people has so fine a proverb as "Don't take your rubbish outside your hut"?

Even if the White Guard had founded a constitutional democracy on an island refuge from Bolshevism, Aksyonov suggests, the result would not be an enduring open society, the Russia We Could Have Loved—at least not for long. The Sovietization of Crimea is not criminally imposed from without, against the island's Rousseauistic general will; it organizes itself from within, enthusiastically chosen by referendum in response to brilliant leadership. Welcoming banners fly on the day Soviet tanks paralyze traffic in the streets of Simferopol and the first queues form in its supermarkets.

In Aksyonov's satire, all acts of political

METAPHYSICS AT LAKE OSWEGO

Dawn like never before.
Rosy bands across bare trees.
For the beginner doubt and possibility both
cradle in the pink sky,
like the beginner empty and ready,
as if an egg under each arm
and without breaking them.

Ada rows out on the lake, oar-plash and bird-call.
So much in love with the music
she just moves, that's all. Great hips!
From the shore you're familiar
with her look—you must tame her
focus to see your human face.
Cradled in a boat her body

confirms destiny, already out this March
starving the deer, demanding
you dissemble and bow down
and to whom. Ada in a boat, Ada
on the shore, in the waning days of your twenties,
Ada bathing. Your whole life is overcoming
the past which is fixed

to repeat. With a kind of innocence
rustling the underbrush
you'd crawl from the spot,
red ant toward the real trees,
were she not always undressing
there before a swim. Dawn
like never before charges up

in you, alizarin, perfect and wanton
with something to express, not figure out.
you are here blindly
observing gestures again. Only when they ricochet
do the lights riddle your body:
dignity, hope.
You neither let go nor withhold.

Jane Miller

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messianism over three generations of Russians end in disaster. Luchnikov's Common Fate League recreates in only a few years the disastrous results of the earlier generation's Bolshevik adventure; meanwhile, a youth activist group—Luchnikov's son among its members—bent on establishing a hybrid "Yaki" nationality, language and culture for Crimea, touches off bloody rioting. In Aksyonov's view, scrupulously calculated and organized attempts to engineer history seem to arise periodically from the Russian culture, react with some lurking, herdish sadomasochism and end in decadence, violence and irretrievable human loss. The novel's final image is of the end of history itself and the beginning of meaninglessness, of time as mere clockwork sequence:

> Tormented, in great anguish, he glanced over and over at the illuminated dial of his watch. Suddenly something happened to the mechanism, and the second, minute, and hour hands began spinning with great speed, senselessly racing after one another, and the days of the week in their little window began pushing one another out of the way: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. . .

Luchnikov's idea of a common fate is one of the most inventive ironies in recent Soviet émigré political satire: reunification will not restore Crimean guts and talent to all Russia; it will bring Soviet decrepitude to Crimea, at the island's own invitation. The numbing Soviet winter spills at last over sunny Yalta. The ultimate cause is apparently the Why and Wherefore, some inexorable menace inherent in Russian history.

The Island of Crimea is fairly quiet about Western history and afflictions. The portrayal of Western political and economic conditions as perfectly suitable for the development of a brutal sovietism is not meant to criticize the West but to suggest that the West will not work in the East; Western institutions simply cannot survive for long grafted onto a national character incompatible with them. But if in Aksyonov's view there is a sleek and senseless shark devouring the hopes of Russian culture, it is hard to imagine that there is not another one, perhaps of a slightly different species, devouring our own. Although less deliberately universal in scope than *The Yawning Heights*, Aksyonov's satire is no less thoughtful or impassioned. The recent

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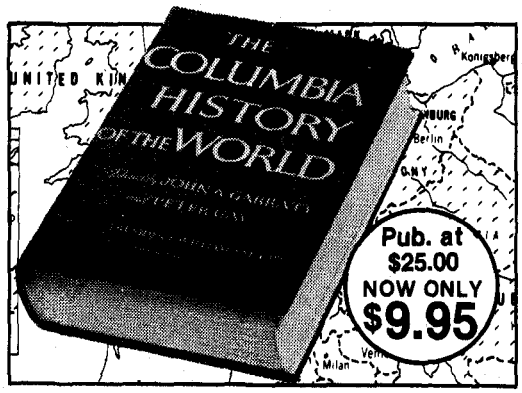

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English editions of both writers' works remind us that the problem of the Russian people remains the problem of civilization. □

Housework: Is Less More?

MICHAEL S. KIMMEL

MORE WORK FOR MOTHER: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave. *By Ruth Schwartz Cowan. Basic Books. 257 pp. $17.95.*

"A woman's work is never done, and happy she whose strength holds out to the end of the (sun's) rays," wrote Martha Moore Ballard in her diary in 1795. Almost a century later, Mary Hallock Foote complained, "I am daily dropped in little pieces and passed around and devoured and expected to be whole again next day and all days and I am never alone for a single minute." Today it's no different, contends Ruth Schwartz Cowan in this intriguing, if ultimately unconvincing, book. Housewives remain "overworked and perpetually exhausted," actually doing more housework today than they ever did.

A historian of technology at SUNY-Stony Brook, Cowan joins a number of feminist scholars—among them Ann Oakley, Susan Strasser and Dolores Hayden—in rescuing the housewife from the academic dustbin (or trash compactor). Cowan advances her thesis by examining the tools of housework themselves. Her assessment suggests that the last two centuries have seen the "industrialization of the home" as the byproduct of general economic trends. The home is not a bulwark against industrialization—a "haven in a heartless world"—but as much an industrial arena as the factory. Complex tasks such as cooking and laundering imply a sophisticated technology that enmeshes the household in the market economy. Refracted through the prism of household technology, the "natural" division of labor by gender turns out, in Cowan's view, to be not very divided and not at all natural.

Prior to industrialization, Cowan writes, men's and women's work, household and market, had overlapped. Women helped in the fields, men helped in the house. Industrialization shattered this mutualism; milled flour, cast-iron stoves, municipal water, gas and electric power "made it possible for men to work at wage labor without endangering . . . the standard of living of their families." Suddenly household tasks were suitable only for women, and just as suddenly there appeared a spate of new appliances that isolated the housewife in her home, even as the house was bound more tightly to the market. Industrialized housework demanded skilled labor; housework became a career, the housewife a professional, daily performing hundreds of complicated machine operations and overseeing the flow of myriad consumer items in and out of the house. The new technologies—gas stoves, washing machines, refrigerators—increased domestic productivity but also raised the standards of cleanliness, trapping the housewife in an endless chain of technical non-solutions to increased labor, a virtual domestic speedup. It wasn't long before someone proposed household Taylorism. In *The New Housekeeping* (1913), Christine Frederick advocated time and motion studies for the "household engineer."

Other women had different ideas. Cooperative kitchens, laundries and child-care centers sprang up across the country, as domestic reformers sought to relieve isolation as well as household drudgery. Even the *Ladies' Home Journal* looked forward to the "emancipation of women from the duplication in every household of equipment and labor for tasks that can be done cooperatively." Yet each of these communal or cooperative experiments failed. What succeeded were the multitude of individualized household appliances, geared as much to the burgeoning corporations' search for consumer markets as to the needs of housewives. This is well illustrated in Cowan's discussion of the refrigerator. The triumph of compressor over absorption models, she notes, had less to do with intrinsic merits—both were equally functional, esthetically unappealing and costly—than with profitability.

When Cowan's analysis shifts from the kitchen to the corporate boardroom, though, her argument begins to unravel. She argues that "it was demand for goods . . . that continued to fuel the economy being formed by those who were organizing the manufacture of goods." But demand did not simply pop into consumers' heads; it was carefully placed there by another new industry—advertising—which grew up alongside mass production. Advertising rewrote the history of household technology, creating desires as well as meeting needs. The worlds of the large corporations and ad agencies never come into focus, though, and lurk like shadows along the edges of her analysis.

As a result, Cowan does not fully appreciate the subtle ideological shifts that accompanied the marriage of corporate capital and advertising. The separation of work and home created new roles for men and women: breadwinner and homemaker. As masculinity was associated with the ability to provide for a family, advertising linked womanhood with household competence. Industrialization had made housework a career; advertising images transformed it into a calling, recasting genuine concern for cleanliness, good nutrition and comfort into persistent anxieties. A woman who truly loved her family would never allow yellow waxy buildup or ring around the collar. Women fell prey to the "senseless tyranny of spotless shirts and immaculate floors," because to fail as a homemaker was to fail as a woman. Not only that, it was anti-American, since, as one observer noted in 1917, "cleanliness of home and person contributes toward the growth of democracy."

To associate housecleaning with national security—fear of the great unwashed?—requires a remarkable leap of logic, but no greater than the leap Cowan herself invites if her central thesis is accepted. The history of tools, she argues, impels the conclusion that women work longer and harder today than they ever did. Arguments like this—that the dawn of industrial capitalism woke humankind from a pastoral mutualism, introduced the gender division of labor and separated work and home—have become popular recently, especially following Ivan Illich's pathetic search for a lost utopia in *Gender*. But this idea of the shattering of bucolic bliss by the industrial leviathan relies on a serious misreading of both past and present. For one thing, the preindustrial housewife's job was

Michael S. Kimmel teaches sociology at Rutgers University. He is the book review editor of Society *and a contributing editor of* The San Francisco Review of Books.

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much more physically taxing than it is today—lifting, hauling water and wood, kneading, pounding and scrubbing were backbreaking tasks, so much so that it was not uncommon for a man to outlive two or more wives. They simply wore out. The idea of cooperation between men and women in major household work is largely illusory; Cowan's romanticized view of the family ignores the history of separate spheres which long antedates her study. Further, even if housewives work as long today as ever—which is doubtful—there is no evidence that it is because there is any more work to be done. As Betty Friedan pointed out twenty years ago, much housework is "made work," which expands to fill available time. It may be that modern housework is more privatized, but Cowan fails to persuade that it is either more time-consuming or more difficult.

The dreams of the domestic reformers have also resurfaced, now cleverly sponsored by corporate capital. We may not cook in communal kitchens, but we do have neighborhood laundromats, takeout Chinese food and a wide assortment of precooked dinners in the frozen food section of the supermarket, all geared to the modern woman who has neither time nor interest in housework. To look at the history of household technology and yearn for the good old days requires a materialism so crude that it ignores significant historical innovations, and a romanticized vision of preindustrial tasks that screens out the options that industrialism opened for women. □

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'A Baby Flamingo' and Her Mom

SUZANNE MANTELL

ROSIE. *By Anne Lamott. Viking. 275 pp. $16.95.*

The story *Rosie* tells is as lively and quirky as its characters, a mother and daughter adrift in a world that neither knows quite how to live in. The mother, Elizabeth, is a literate and ambitious woman hobbled by anxieties, inertia and liquor. Her daughter, Rosie—sharp and imaginative, "a baby flamingo"—is equally anxious. She worries over her mother's drinking, her dead father, the monsters that lurk under her bed. She scowls and skulks and shuffles around to express her moods, like any other 8-year-old but more so. When she's feeling put out, she calls Elizabeth "Miss Mother."

Not quite equals, Elizabeth and Rosie live together as such, in total support of each other as they tread water to stay afloat. In due course their ranks swell to include two other characters: an earth-mother neighbor named Rae who weaves wall hangings and loves inferior men, and Elizabeth's eventual spouse, a writer named James. James is Elizabeth's Mr. Right in spite of his glaring flaws: extreme shortness, smoker's breath, a penchant for polyester clothes and a vulgar style of chewing his food—like a starving rodent, in Elizabeth's view, which does indeed sound awful. She claims she could never fall in love with him, because "Love is details," and she is repelled by his. But of course she does fall in love, because he is her match in the ways that count.

If love is details, so is storytelling, and Anne Lamott excels at it. Her way with analogy, metaphor and evocative detail is subtle; her ability to shift from the specific to the general to the specific again, superb. More to the point, she puts these talents at the service of her characters and they are revealed through them. Rae exhausts herself trying to persuade Elizabeth to try something new, to expand her horizons. Finally she asks, "What do you think the odds are that you'll go backpacking with me?" "About ten to one," Elizabeth answers. "Oh yeah? That's not so bad." When James tells Elizabeth that the book manuscript he has poured his heart into has been rejected, he tells her: "The editor . . . said it was stupid and badly written and boring and he hoped I would die." Then he shows Elizabeth the letter, a rather encouraging No, which concludes: "You have a lot of talent." She asks, "Where's the part where he hopes you die?" "You have to read between the lines," he says.

Like *Hard Laughter*, Lamott's earlier novel, *Rosie* gives us an emotionally complex domestic landscape in which life's hard knocks and tough breaks become opportunities for humor and friendship. Her territory is Marin County in northern California, the milieu Cyra McFadden's *Serial* mined, but it's a territory cut loose from stereotype. The mood is loving and lyric, as in Laurie Colwin's *Happy All the Time*, but darkened by an ominous intensity reminiscent of John Irving's *Garp*. It's a winsome combination, and occasional brief plot lapses, where the delicate structure is made to take more weight than it can bear, are easy to glide over in favor of the overall sense of affirmation. □

Suzanne Mantell is a magazine editor and a writer.

FILMS.

KATHA POLLITT

Gorky Park
To Be or Not To Be

I enjoyed Martin Cruz Smith's novel *Gorky Park* enormously, even if I didn't understand the end. (It was a stunning turn to have Arkady Renko, our Russian policeman hero, release into the wilds of Staten Island the stolen sables he was sent to retrieve, but how was he going to bargain his way back into the Soviet Union without them? Drop me a line if you figured that one out.) A first-rate thriller, *Gorky Park* was raised above genre by its energetic, brooding prose and by its many layers of cross-cultural irony: Moscow looks drab to us, New York looks heartless to them; the K.G.B. kills its enemies, but when it comes to psychopathic murder and the mutilation of corpses, *cherchez l'Américain*.

The novel is so clearly constructed around visually striking scenes—that puzzling end, for one, with the dark

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sables scampering across the white snow—I wondered as I read if Smith wasn't writing with an eye toward a film version. If so, I hope he's stayed away from Michael Apted's movie. It will break his heart. Just about every pleasure of the novel is gone: the melancholy, romantic atmosphere has evaporated like so much mist along the Moskva River; the intricate plot, with its dazzling pattern of clues and surprises, has been flattened into a rather dull police procedural; the East-West comparisons are lost by filming the Moscow section in Helsinki, which looks like Cleveland, and by moving the New York sections to Stockholm, which looks like an airport.

William Hurt plays Arkady like a graduate student with a hangover—a *beer* hangover; he isn't world-weary, he's stolid. As his beloved Irina, the young Polish discovery Joanna Pacula conveys the requisite smoky mysteriousness, but the darker side of the character—the thirst for emigration at any price that is ultimately revealed as soullessness—has been dropped, so her role in the plot makes no sense. Burly Brian Dennehy is solid as the New York cop who teams up with Arkady, and Patrick Field, as Arkady's red-nosed and foul-mouthed assistant, adds a much-needed dash of humor, but the only real spark comes from Lee Marvin as the villainous American fur trader, Jack Osborne. Sleek, bored and elaborately ironic, he could be a madman scorning his plodding pursuers, or a world-class actor condescendingly musing on the mess of a film he's in.

If *Gorky Park* takes first-class material and ruins it, *To Be or Not To Be* does the opposite: even Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft can't save this movie from the fundamental callousness of its premise. Nazis taking over Poland wasn't funny in 1942, when Jack Benny and Carole Lombard starred in the original version, and it's even less funny now, because we know some things about the Nazis those wartime audiences didn't. Thus, when Brooks and Bancroft, as a rivalrous husband-and-wife theater team, use their thespian wiles to rescue their Jewish and homosexual friends from the death camps, we are only reminded of the millions that *didn't* get rescued. When I wasn't laughing I was angry; when I was laughing—which was often, because Brooks and Bancroft are inspired comics—I felt guilty. □

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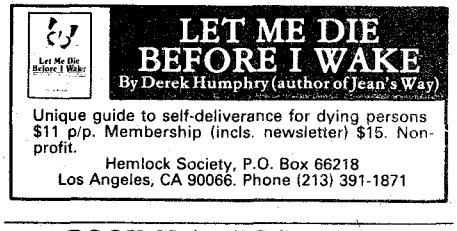
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REVOLUTIONARY literature/arts magazine needs poetry, drawings, prints, cartoons, reviews. No payment. SASE. Stake Publications, Box 7223, Baltimore, MD 21218.

LATIN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES (journal): Radical Marxist quarterly analysis of contemporary and historical developments. Spring/Summer 1980 double issue on Central America ($7.50). Spring 1981 on revolutionary Nicaragua ($6). Winter 1983 on revolution in Central America ($6). Subscriptions $16.50. Sage Publications, Box 5024, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

"FOOTNOTE ON AN HISTORIC CASE: IN RE ALGER HISS." This booklet by author William A. Reuben identifies 114 factual errors in the Federal District Court of New York's decision upholding Hiss's conviction for perjury in 1950. This flawed decision stands as the last legal word on one of the most celebrated cases in modern history. 1 copy $5, 10 copies $40, 50 copies $150, 100 copies $250. Make checks payable to The Nation Institute and send to "Hiss," The Nation Institute, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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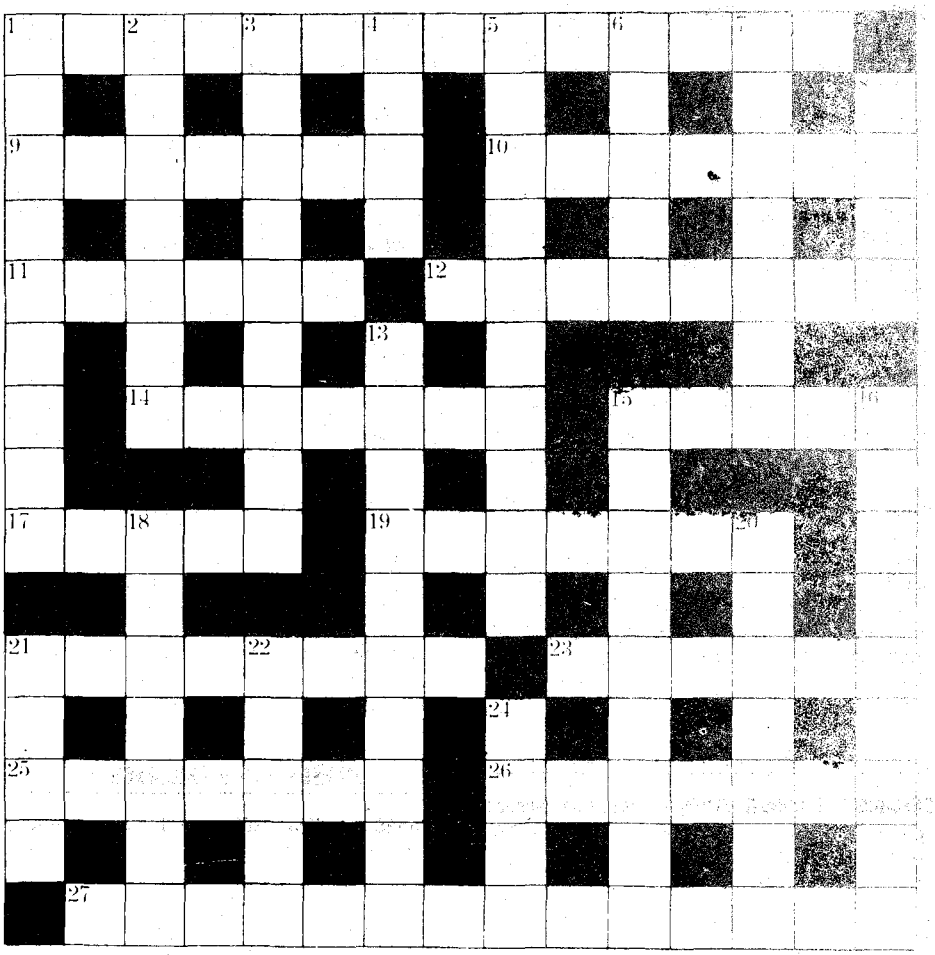
Crossword Puzzle No. 1994

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and 13 down Well, one in February isn't seen quite so often! (4,2,2,4,2,1,3,2,4)
9 Possible chatter as a result of its having teeth? (7)
10 Two, going into four? (One might break up the room!) (7)
11 Sesame, in a word—it might be handy if you want a bottle of beer. (6)
12 Hardly how things are found during a shortage! (8)
14 Concerning one who poses "what to do about the old kitchen?" (7)
15 A cab is found to be indispensable here. (5)
17 The full length of a rule. (5)
19 You don't get it? None of us can, though it starts with you having the end of danger. (7)
21 Vandals might be making things featureless. (8)
23 Proust seems to be difficult, leaving some of us in this. (6)
25 The outskirts might be considered a little fancy. (7)
26 *Easy Rider II* implied by this? (7)
27 It doesn't mean a single thing with one belted under, possibly. (6-8)

DOWN

1 Was the German row caused by one? (9)
2 Where one sees an insect carry an animal. (3,4)
3 The one Munich turned out could also be an animal, and yet fly. (9)
4 Goes down in places. (4)
5 Sublime antithesis. (10)
6 One that splits the stream? (5)
7 Speech typified by 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. (7)
8 How to make an old-fashioned vehicle measure up? (4)
13 See 1 across
15 Certainly not big game, being somewhat old-fashioned. (9)
16 Comes out of the core, hence it implies sticking together. (9)
18 No concluding reason, but it looks like hell! (7)
20 One way to make a pile, even in the red, as someone said in answer. (7)
21 Perhaps a common replica of a gull. (4)
22 How to achieve upward mobility? (5)
24 What a spider might do when coming up with little bites. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1993

O	A	S	I	S	■	L	U	C	K	Y	D	O	G	S
R	■	T	■	T	■	O	■	E	■	E	■	R	■	E
D	A	R	T	A	G	N	A	N	■	A	N	G	E	L
E	■	A	■	B	■	G	■	T	■	R	■	A	■	V
R	O	Y	A	L	B	L	U	E	■	L	A	N	C	E
S	■	S	■	E	■	O	■	R	■	I	■	D	■	D
■	■	■	■	■	A	S	T	O	U	N	D	I	N	G
O	■	B	■	H	■	T	■	F	■	G	■	E	■	E
B	U	R	L	A	P	B	A	G	S	■	■	■	■	■
J	■	I	■	I	■	R	■	R	■	I	■	S	■	A
E	G	G	E	R	■	O	R	A	N	G	U	T	A	N
C	■	A	■	C	■	T	■	V	■	N	■	E	■	O
T	A	N	G	O	■	H	O	I	P	O	L	L	O	I
O	■	D	■	M	■	E	■	T	■	R	■	L	■	N
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